

**COMMENT LETTER 1****UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY****REGION IX****75 Hawthorne Street****San Francisco, CA 94105-3901**

February 19, 2008

Jessica Meaney  
Southern California Association of Governments  
818 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, California 90017

**Subject:** EPA Comments on the Draft 2008 Southern California Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan and the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan

Dear Ms. Meaney:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft 2008 Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR) for the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan. EPA is committed to the goal of incorporating environmental considerations early in the transportation planning process. This early coordination results in greater opportunities to avoid sensitive resources and minimize impacts associated with future transportation projects.

On August 27, 2007, EPA provided comments on the 2007 SCAG Public Participation Plan Draft Amendment No.1. In October 2006, EPA participated in a mitigation workshop and provided comments on the mitigation measures of the SCAG 2004 Regional Transportation Plan PEIR for the 2007-2008 RTP update. The workshop was part of an expanded consultation effort by SCAG under Section 6001 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

SAFETEA-LU directs metropolitan planning organizations to consult with resource agencies while developing long-range transportation plans. It also states that long range transportation plans must include "a discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the plan." EPA provides the following comments in support of compliance with these requirements.

**Transportation Conformity and Air Quality**

EPA's air planning staff has an established relationship with SCAG for transportation conformity consultation (40 CFR 93.105) and is currently undergoing

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separate discussions with SCAG on conformity. As such, the comments provided in this letter address non-conformity related elements of the plan. If you have conformity-related or air quality questions on the RTP, please contact Karina O'Connor of our Air Planning Office at 775-833-1276 or [occonnor.karina@epa.gov](mailto:occonnor.karina@epa.gov).

1 cont.

### **Update the RTP to Address the Impacts in the Region Associated with Port-Related Operations**

As the Draft RTP highlights, port operations are expected to continue to grow at a rapid rate. Local communities that are already heavily affected by existing air quality conditions would be further impacted by the numerous freight-related projects expected in the port area and throughout the region. Given the magnitude of port operations, their expected growth, and the severe air quality problems that could be exacerbated, EPA recommends the Final RTP and Final PEIR include: (1) a discussion that discloses the public health implications to the region and, specifically, to communities adjacent to the ports and major freight transport corridors, (2) a description of cumulative impacts on public health and the current environment as well as trends that have contributed to impacts and/or losses to these resources, (3) a commitment to mitigation measures that are, at a minimum, consistent with the Clean Air Action Plan (CAAP), and (4) opportunities to engage and SCAG's commitment to work with other agencies to identify strategies that extend beyond CAAP provisions that would allow for earlier implementation to improve air quality. These recommendations are described in more detail below.

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- **Incorporate a discussion of the public health implications to the region and, specifically, to communities adjacent to ports and major freight transportation corridors**

Although we recognize the breadth of the RTP and the inherent challenge of addressing the myriad issues in the SCAG region, the Final RTP and Final PEIR should at least broadly discuss and disclose the public health impacts from transportation activities in the region in general, and freight related impacts in particular. A regional-specific health impacts section is absent from the Draft RTP and EPA recommends that SCAG include such a discussion in the 'Transportation Planning Challenges' section of the Final RTP. This critical backdrop should be integral to a planning document of this scope which will ultimately be relied upon by decision makers.

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- **Include a description of cumulative impacts on public health and the current environment as well as trends that have contributed to impacts and/or losses to these resources**

As you are aware, an estimated 14 combined Environmental Impact Reports/Environmental Impact Statements (EIR/EIS) and almost twice as many EIRs are to be developed in support of port-related infrastructure projects over the next few years. This large volume of future proposed projects in the ports, if implemented, will lead to substantial cumulative construction and operation-related environmental impacts in already highly impacted areas. We recommend

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that SCAG include a description of these cumulative impacts and describe the current trends associated with impacts on public health and resources.

4 cont.

- **As applicable to the RTP, identify mitigation measures which are at least as stringent as Clean Air Action Plan (CAAP) requirements**

EPA acknowledges SCAG's reference to the current South Coast Air Quality Management Plan, State Implementation Plan, and the California Air Resources Board regulations as mitigation strategies in the Draft PEIR. We also were particularly encouraged by the discussion of alternative based systems (page 2-19 of Draft PEIR) and on-dock rail use (page 8 of Goods Movement appendix) as additional strategies that should be considered in minimizing environmental impacts. While these various strategies and regulations are worth pursuing and implementing, it is unclear from the current draft what SCAG sees as additional strategies which should be implemented in the region. For example, the San Pedro Bay Ports' CAAP is only mentioned in the Goods Movement appendix and is not mentioned in either the Draft PEIR or Draft RTP. EPA recommends that all proposed mitigation measures be identified in the Final PEIR and that any goods movement-related measures, as relevant to the RTP, should meet or exceed current CAAP emission requirements. The Final PEIR should also clearly state that mitigation should be implemented in a timely manner sufficient to ensure the maximum protection of the surrounding communities from air quality impacts.

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- **Include additional opportunities to expand upon emission reduction strategies above and beyond current regulations**

In order to tackle the public health and air quality challenges of the region, SCAG should identify opportunities to go above and beyond current SIP commitments and state regulations and even CAAP goals to identify opportunities to avoid and mitigate air quality impacts. As highlighted in the Draft RTP, we support the interagency effort between the California Air Resources Board, the South Coast Air Quality Management District, and SCAG to develop a white paper which identifies additional strategies to reduce the 'black box'. EPA recommends that SCAG identify other opportunities where additional coordination could lead to currently unidentified strategies. Many of the rulemakings and funding decisions highlighted by the Draft PEIR and Draft RTP are not yet final and implementation may not occur for some time. Thus, the predominantly low income and disproportionately impacted communities in the area of freight related facilities could still experience adverse air quality-related health impacts upon implementation of various projects. This planning document should help identify additional opportunities that could result in expedited improvements to air quality.

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**Include Additional RTP Performance Standards to Measure Environmental Results of the RTP, such as a Surrogate to Measure the Plan's Success in Protecting Sensitive Habitat.**

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The RTP has identified emissions generated by travel as a performance standard to address the RTP's effectiveness of meeting its goal to protect the environment, improve air quality, and promote energy efficiency. Given that the region has experienced significant losses to species and habitat from development encroachment and transportation construction, the RTP should identify additional performance standards to demonstrate how the RTP will meet its environmental goals. EPA recommends including additional performance measures to address the RTP's effectiveness at protecting species, wildlife or wetland habitat, and/or open space.

8 cont.

**Maintain and Expand Compass Blueprint Growth Policies in the RTP**

EPA commends SCAG on integrating its Compass Blueprint Growth Vision into the RTP. In particular, EPA supports the investment of a greater share of transportation resources to promoting public transit and other alternative modes instead of facilitating single-occupant vehicle use. Efforts to expand transit service, increase rideshare, and integrate bicycle and transit nodes offer the opportunity to support the region's goal of reducing growth in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and in turn, improve air quality. The emphasis on planning for additional housing and jobs near transit and identifying regional strategic areas for infill and investment is also commendable, as it will also assist in decreasing VMT and related pollutant emissions.

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We support continued efforts to provide resources and tools to local jurisdictions to make their general plans and proposed projects consistent with the RTP and the Compass Blueprint. We encourage SCAG to work to limit RTP amendments that would be inconsistent with the Compass Blueprint. The RTP's Envision Alternative builds on the enhanced density and ideas of the Compass Blueprint and uses bold strategies to further benefit mobility and air quality. To the extent possible, EPA recommends incorporating concepts of the Envision Alternative into the Final RTP. It includes far more aggressive densities than the Proposed Plan Alternative of the RTP and limits the development of single-family housing that would be built in the region.

**Clearly Describe How SCAG's Multiple Planning Efforts (the RTP, Regional Comprehensive Plan, and Future Open Space Guidance) Will Be Coordinated to Inform Regional Avoidance and Minimization of Impacts to Resources (page 131 of RTP)**

The RTP is an appropriate venue to examine and consider high quality resources that occur across the entire region to best inform avoidance of these resources as early as possible for transportation, not only at the project level, but strategically at the regional scale addressed through this document. In all projects, EPA encourages agencies to first avoid, then minimize, and finally mitigate environmental impacts of their actions. To integrate resource planning with transportation and land use planning, SCAG is jointly issuing the RTP and a Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) and will produce Open Space Guidance in the future. In the fast-growing SCAG region, it is critical that open space, functioning ecosystem areas, and critical linkages not only be identified for

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protection, but be used as criteria for determining the location of all proposed transportation decisions.

EPA is interested in how the RCP and Open Space Guidance will integrate with and influence the RTP. In the Final RTP and PEIR, EPA recommends that SCAG: (1) clearly describe how the RCP and Open Space Guidance will inform regional avoidance and minimization strategies when planning regional transportation networks, and (2) describe how the various planning efforts (RTP, CMP, and future Open Space Guidance) are coordinated. The Final PEIR should explain how information developed for the CMP and Open Space Guidance may be incorporated into long-term planning for transportation infrastructure, as well as environmental and alternatives analysis for individual transportation projects. SCAG should also ensure consistency between these regional planning efforts and other conservation efforts, such as local Habitat Conservation Plans and Natural Communities Conservation Plans.

10 cont.

**Clarify in the RTP How the RCP or the Compass Blueprint Effort Influenced Any Current Design and Route Network Location Decisions**

EPA recognizes that SCAG intends to apply the RTP, in conjunction with SCAG's RCP and policies of the Compass Blueprint, in the planning of future projects to address the region's mobility needs in a way that is sensitive to communities and the environment. However the RTP should clearly state how the information provided in the RCP and the Compass Blueprint has informed the decision-making behind the projects already proposed in the RTP. EPA recommends that, at a regional level, the RTP identify how proposed transportation projects have been planned to (1) maximize use of existing infrastructure, such as, improvements to existing roadways and transit service, and (2) avoid and minimize high quality resources and habitat. The RTP should also identify what design and route network location decisions were proposed in order to avoid and/or minimize impacts to resources. It should be clear how information about resources, including the RCP and policies of the Compass Blueprint, has informed decisions about the route network.

**Work Through and Resolve Resource and Regulatory Agency Concerns During Early Corridor and Project Planning**

The Draft RTP describes SCAG's intent to pursue "an innovative, environmentally sensitive approach to considering future development and transportation projects (see Corridor Preservation Section, page 201 of the RTP)". This approach envisions that transportation options will be developed with consideration for environmentally sensitive land-uses and habitat issues as part of the planning and design criteria. It would involve early and active involvement by all stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels. The Draft RTP recommends the Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) undertaken in Riverside County as a template for other agencies and jurisdictions seeking to preserve rights-of-way (ROW) for long-range transportation needs.

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EPA is highly supportive of incorporating environmental considerations during route planning and early interagency coordination to identify and resolve key issues before the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process begins. Early coordination benefits project proponents and the public by reducing project delays, increasing project certainty, and improving environmental outcomes. For successful early collaboration, EPA recommends that project proponents ensure that the early coordination provides a genuine opportunity to work through and resolve agency concerns during the planning stage and is not used as an opportunity to simply flag issues to discuss at a later date during project development and the NEPA and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) processes. In addition, EPA recommends that SCAG ensure efforts to preserve right of way (ROW) for future corridors fully examine transit alternatives, a mix of transit options with road alternatives, and/or expansion of existing facilities.

11 cont.

**Additional Resources**

For beneficial reuse ideas in transportation projects, attached are EPA fact sheets on the use of compost-based materials for stormwater/erosion control and the use of recycled industrial materials and their potential use in road construction (Enclosures).

EPA values the opportunity to be involved in the regional transportation planning process. We hope that this involvement will lead to more efficient project planning and improved environmental outcomes. When the Final RTP and PEIR are available, please send a copy of each to the address above. If you have any questions about our comments, feel free to contact me at [sturges.susan@epa.gov](mailto:sturges.susan@epa.gov) or by phone at 415-947-4188.

Sincerely,



Susan Sturges, Life Scientist  
Environmental Review Office

**Enclosures**

cc: Jessica Kirchner, Southern California Association of Governments  
Marilee Mortenson, Caltrans  
Michelle Noch, Federal Highway Administration

## COMMENT LETTER 2



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE *of* PLANNING AND RESEARCH  
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE AND PLANNING UNIT



CYNTHIA BRYANT  
DIRECTOR

February 20, 2008

Jessica Kirchner  
Southern California Association of Governments  
818 W. Seventh Street, 12th Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3435

Subject: 2008 Regional Transportation Plan  
SCH#: 2007061126

Dear Jessica Kirchner:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Draft EIR to selected state agencies for review. On the enclosed Document Details Report please note that the Clearinghouse has listed the state agencies that reviewed your document. The review period closed on February 19, 2008, and the comments from the responding agency (ies) is (are) enclosed. If this comment package is not in order, please notify the State Clearinghouse immediately. Please refer to the project's ten-digit State Clearinghouse number in future correspondence so that we may respond promptly.

Please note that Section 21104(c) of the California Public Resources Code states that:

"A responsible or other public agency shall only make substantive comments regarding those activities involved in a project which are within an area of expertise of the agency or which are required to be carried out or approved by the agency. Those comments shall be supported by specific documentation."

These comments are forwarded for use in preparing your final environmental document. Should you need more information or clarification of the enclosed comments, we recommend that you contact the commenting agency directly.

This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. Please contact the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process.

Sincerely,

Terry Roberts  
Director, State Clearinghouse

Enclosures  
cc: Resources Agency

**COMMENT LETTER 2**  
**Document Details Report**  
**State Clearinghouse Data Base**

**SCH#** 2007061126  
**Project Title** 2008 Regional Transportation Plan  
**Lead Agency** Southern California Association of Governments

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**Type** EIR Draft EIR  
**Description** The 2008 RTP is a long-range regional transportation plan that provides a blueprint to help achieve a coordinated and balanced regional transportation system in the SCAG region. The SCAG region is comprised of six counties: Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura.

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**Lead Agency Contact**

**Name** Jessica Kirchner  
**Agency** Southern California Association of Governments  
**Phone** (213) 236-1983 **Fax**  
**email** kirchner@scag.ca.gov  
**Address** 818 W. Seventh Street, 12th Floor  
**City** Los Angeles **State** CA **Zip** 90017-3435

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**Project Location**

**County** Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, ...  
**City**  
**Region**  
**Cross Streets**  
**Parcel No.**  
**Township**

**Range** **Section** **Base**

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**Proximity to:**

**Highways**  
**Airports**  
**Railways**  
**Waterways**  
**Schools**  
**Land Use**

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**Project Issues** Aesthetic/Visual; Agricultural Land; Air Quality; Archaeologic-Historic; Biological Resources; Coastal Zone; Cumulative Effects; Drainage/Absorption; Economics/Jobs; Flood Plain/Flooding; Forest Land/Fire Hazard; Geologic/Seismic; Growth Inducing; Landuse; Noise; Population/Housing Balance; Public Services; Recreation/Parks; Schools/Universities; Septic System; Sewer Capacity; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Solid Waste; Toxic/Hazardous; Vegetation; Water Quality; Water Supply; Wetland/Riparian

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**Reviewing Agencies** Resources Agency; Department of Parks and Recreation; Native American Heritage Commission; Public Utilities Commission; Office of Emergency Services; Department of Fish and Game, Headquarters; California Energy Commission; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, Division of Aeronautics; Caltrans, Division of Transportation Planning; State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Water Quality; Air Resources Board, Transportation Projects; Department of Conservation; Regional Water Quality Control Bd., Region 6 (Victorville)

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**Date Received** 01/04/2008 **Start of Review** 01/04/2008 **End of Review** 02/19/2008

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**California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Lahontan Region**



Linda S. Adams  
Secretary for  
Environmental Protection

Victorville Office  
14440 Civic Drive, Suite 200, Victorville, California 92392  
(760) 241-6583 • Fax (760) 241-7308  
<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan>

Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor

February 11, 2008

File: Environmental Doc Review  
San Bernardino & LA Counties

Jessica Meaney, Assistant Regional Planner  
Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)  
818 West Seventh Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3435  
Fax (213) 236-1825

**COMMENTS ON THE NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (SCAG) 2008 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP)  
PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (PEIR), ADDRESSING THE  
TRANSPORTATION NEEDS FOR THE SCAG REGION THROUGH 2035, WHICH INCLUDES  
THE COUNTIES OF IMPERIAL, LOS ANGELES, ORANGE, RIVERSIDE, SAN BERNARDINO  
AND VENTURA (SCH # 2007061126)**

Please refer to the items checked for staff comments on the above-referenced project:

- [ X ] The site plan for this project does not specifically identify features for the post-construction period that will control stormwater on-site or prevent pollutants from non-point sources from entering and degrading surface or ground waters. The foremost method of reducing impacts to watersheds from urban development is "Low Impact Development" (LID), the goals of which are maintaining a landscape functionally equivalent to predevelopment hydrologic conditions and minimal generation of nonpoint source pollutants. LID results in less surface runoff and potentially less impacts to receiving waters. Principles of LID include:
- Maintaining natural drainage paths and landscape features to slow and filter runoff and maximize groundwater recharge,
  - Reducing the impervious cover created by development and the associated transportation network, and
  - Managing runoff as close to the source as possible.

We understand that LID development practices that would maintain aquatic values could also reduce local infrastructure requirements and maintenance costs, and could benefit air quality, open space, and habitat. Planning tools to implement the above principles and manuals are available to provide specific guidance regarding LID.

We request you require these principles to be incorporated into the proposed project design. We request natural drainage patterns be maintained to the extent feasible. Future development plans should consider the following items:

- [ X ] The project requires development of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and
- ☒ a NPDES General Construction Stormwater Permit and/or
  - ☒ a NPDES General Industrial Stormwater Permit

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These permits are accessible on the State Board's Homepage ([www.waterboards.ca.gov](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov)). Best Management Practices must be used to mitigate project impacts. The environmental document must describe the mitigation measures or Best Management Practices.

- [ X ] The program requires Federal Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certifications from the Regional Board. Application forms can be found at our web site (<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/>).

- [ X ] The program, even though mentioned the necessities to apply for appropriate 401 and 404 permits, does not provide specific information on how impacts to surface Waters of the State and/or Waters of the U.S. will be mitigated on specific project level. These surface waters include, but are not limited to, drainages, streams, washes, ponds, pools or wetlands. Waters of the State or Waters of the U.S. may be permanent or intermittent. Waters of the State may include waters determined to be isolated or otherwise non-jurisdictional by the Army Corps of Engineers. The Environmental Document needs to quantify these impacts. Discuss purpose of project, need for surface water disturbance, and alternatives (avoidance, minimize disturbances and mitigation). Mitigation must be identified in the environmental document including timing of construction.

Mitigation must replace functions and values of wetlands lost. For more information see the Lahontan Region Basin Plan [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/BPlan/BPlan\\_Index.htm](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/BPlan/BPlan_Index.htm).

- [ X ] Other

- Please include both pre-construction and post construction stormwater management and best management practices (BMP) as part of planning process.
- Please consider designs that minimize impervious surface, such as permeable surface parking areas, directing runoff onto vegetated areas using curb cuts and rock swales, etc., and infiltrating runoff as close to the source as possible to avoid forming erosion channels. Design features should be incorporated to ensure that runoff is not concentrated by the proposed project. The project must incorporate measures to ensure that stormwater generated by the project is managed on-site both pre-and post construction. Please show on plan drawings the on-site stormwater control measures.
- If the proposed project is located in an area that contains drainages, wetlands, Waters of the State, Waters of the U.S. or blue-line stream, we request that measures be incorporated into the project to avoid these areas and provide buffer zones where possible. Please inform project proponent to consult with Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Fish and Game, and the Water Board prior to issuing a grading permit.
- Please map and delineate any wetlands and other surface Waters of the State and Waters of the U.S. (see above for definitions of surface Waters of the State and Waters of the U.S.).

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- Please consider development features that span the drainage channels or allow for broad crossings. Design features of future development should be incorporated to ensure that runoff is not concentrated by the proposed project, thereby causing downstream erosion.
- If the proposed project impacts and alters drainages, then we request that the project to be designed such that it would maintain existing drainage features and patterns to the extent feasible. Please inform project proponent to consult with Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Fish and Game, and the Water Board prior to issuing a grading permit.

3 cont.

Due to the nature and scope of this Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), all the specific project level of EIRs still need to be submitted for review and approval from all the regulatory agencies including California Regional Water Quality Control Board. Please note that obtaining a permit and conducting monitoring does not constitute adequate mitigation. Development and implementation of acceptable mitigation is required.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (760) 241-3523, or e-mail me at [tpeng@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:tpeng@waterboards.ca.gov)

Sincerely,



Ted Peng, Ph.D., PG  
Engineering Geologist

cc: State Clearinghouse (SCH # 2007061126)

U/rc/Ted Peng/CEQA comments/ SCAG 2008 Regional Transportation Plan Program EIR

**COMMENT LETTER 4**

State of California - The Resources Agency

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor



**DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov>

South Coast Region

4949 Viewridge Avenue

San Diego, CA 92123

(858) 467-4201



February 19, 2008

Ms. Jessica Kirchner  
Southern California Association of Governments  
818 West Seventh Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

**Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2008 Regional Transportation Plan SCH # 2007061126**

Dear Ms. Kirchner:

The Department of Fish and Game (Department) reviewed the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the SCAG 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (Plan) relative to impacts to biological resources. The Plan addresses the transportation needs for the SCAG region through 2035 (including both specific projects and strategies that address transportation and urban form). The SCAG region is comprised of six counties: Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura and totals approximately 38,000 square miles in area. The region stretches from the borders of California/Nevada and California/Arizona to the Pacific Ocean and from the southernmost edge of the Central Valley to the Mexican border. The purpose of the 2008 PEIR is to identify the potentially significant environmental effects of implementing the projects, programs, and policies included in the Plan.

Projects included in the Plan would be designed to address the following: Travel Demand Management (TDM); Increasing Rideshare (Carpool and Vanpool); System Expansion Projects; Highway Improvements; HOV Gap Closures and Connectors; Mixed Flow; Toll and High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lane Corridors and Facilities; Transit Strategies; High-Speed Regional Transport; Aviation; Goods Movement Strategies; Dedicated Lanes for Clean Technology Trucks; Regional Freight Rail Investment and Emission Reduction Package; Alternative Technology-Based Goods Movement/Logistics; and Environmental Justice.

The Plan is a long-range regional transportation planning document that provides a blueprint to help achieve a coordinated and balanced regional transportation system. Transportation projects in the SCAG region must be consistent with the Plan in order to receive federal funding. The Plan is designed to provide a useful, regional-scale environmental planning tool that will support subsequent, site-specific, analysis and identify appropriate measures to minimize adverse environmental effects in the SCAG region. Individual projects are preliminarily identified in the Plan; however, this PEIR is programmatic in nature and does not specifically analyze these projects. Project-level analyses would be prepared by implementing agencies on a project-by-project basis. Project specific planning and implementation undertaken by each implementing agency would depend on a number of issues, including: policies, programs and projects adopted at the local level; restrictions on federal, state and local transportation funds; results of feasibility studies for particular corridors; further environmental review of proposed projects.

*Conserving California's Wildlife Since 1870*

Ms. Kirchner  
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The **Proposed Plan**, which includes all of the elements summarized above, contains transportation/urban form strategies that encourage compact growth, increased jobs/housing balance, and centers-based development where feasible, in all parts of the region. The **No Project Alternative** includes only those programmed transportation projects that received federal environmental clearance by December 2006, projects in the first year of the 2006 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and projects currently undergoing construction or right of way approval. These reasonably foreseeable projects fulfill the definition of the CEQA mandated "No Project Alternative." The **2004 Modified RTP Alternative** is an update of the adopted 2004 RTP to reflect the most recent growth estimates and transportation planning decisions and assumptions. This alternative does not include urban form strategies included within SCAG's Compass Blueprint program (a planning process guided by input from the public and initiated by SCAG to develop a regional strategy for addressing future growth in Southern California), to the extent included within the Plan. The **Envision Alternative** builds on the enhanced density and ideas of the SCAG Compass Blueprint (a planning process guided by input from the public and initiated by SCAG to develop a regional strategy for addressing future growth in Southern California) and described in the Plan and goes further. It includes far more aggressive densities than the Proposed Plan alternative and limits the development of single-family housing that would be built in the region.

We prepared the following statements and comments pursuant to our authority as Trustee Agency with jurisdiction over natural resources affected by the project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Section 15386) and Responsible Agency (Section 15381) over those aspects of the proposed project that come under the purview of the California Endangered Species Act (Fish and Game Code Section 2050 et seq) and Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq. regarding impacts to streams and lakes.

### Project Alternatives

1. As described in the PEIR, The Envision Alternative builds on the enhanced density and ideas of the SCAG Compass Blueprint (a planning process guided by input from the public and initiated by SCAG to develop a regional strategy for addressing future growth in Southern California) and includes far more aggressive densities than the Proposed Plan alternative and limits the development of single-family housing that would be built in the region.

a. The Department is in support of planning for sustained growth that is concentrated within areas that do not contribute to additional urban sprawl into existing natural habitats including identified areas subject to high wildfire and flooding hazards. Steering planned growth away from natural habitat areas and/or areas subject to natural hazards will assist in avoiding the continued loss of biodiversity in the planning area and associated annual expenditures of public resources required to protect human life and property and mitigate for loss of habitats.

### Biological Resource Impacts and Mitigation Measures

1. Table ES-3 of the Executive Summary: Table ES-3 titled *RTP Impacts, Mitigation Measures and Comparison of Alternatives* states "As noted in Chapter 3.0, all mitigation measures should be included in project-level analysis as appropriate. The project proponent or local jurisdiction shall be responsible for ensuring adherence to the mitigation measures prior to construction. For regionally significant projects SCAG shall be provided with documentation of compliance with mitigation measures through its Intergovernmental Review Process in which all regionally significant projects, plans, and programs must be consistent with regional plans and policies."

Ms. Kirchner  
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a. The PEIR should clarify what authority SCAG holds to assure other than voluntary compliance by local jurisdictions with the mitigation measures as described. For example, will individual projects conducted by local jurisdictions be recommended by SCAG for denial of federal funding if said projects are found not to be consistent with the SCAG mitigation measures outlined in the RTP? As conformity may vary between local jurisdictions carrying out each project, achieving appropriate mitigation measures for impacts to biological resources from projects subject to CEQA may be inadequate. Allocating federal funding to only those entities demonstrating compliance with the standard approved SCAG mitigation principals would assist in affording such conformity. This would provide an important mechanism to facilitate local jurisdiction adherence to the law and spirit of CEQA to assure appropriate mitigation measures are implemented as the result of projects which are driven by the SCAG RTP.

2 cont.

2. MM-BIO.8: States that "**Sensitive** habitats (native vegetative communities identified as rare and/or sensitive by the CDFG) and special-status plant species (including vernal pools) impacted by projects shall be restored and augmented, if impacts are temporary, at a 1.1:1 ratio (compensation acres to impacted acres). Permanent impacts shall be compensated for by creating or restoring habitats at a 3:1 ratio as close as possible to the site of the impact."

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a. Mitigation ratio recommendations by the Department may vary depending on a project-by-project basis and may exceed those recommended in MM-BIO.8 above. This should be stated in MM-BIO.8 and other relevant sections in the PEIR.

3. Mohave Ground Squirrel – Mitigation measures should be included in the PEIR for unavoidable impacts to appropriate habitat for mohave ground squirrel (*Spermophilus mohavensis*), a species listed as threatened under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). Incidental take authority under CESA will be required prior to actions that could result in take of any plant or animal species listed under CESA, including, but not limited to, mohave ground squirrel, Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), Willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*) and Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii eximius*).

The Department recommends that Project applicants fund focused surveys for state-listed species, and/or obtain an Incidental Take Permit under Section 2081 of the Fish and Game Code before proceeding with implementation of any Project subject to CESA. In order to obtain an Incidental Take Permit, the applicant will need to: 1) provide an analysis of the impact of the proposed taking; 2) provide an analysis of whether issuance of an Incidental Take Permit would jeopardize the continued existence of the covered species; 3) propose measures that minimize and fully mitigate the impacts of the proposed taking; 4) provide a proposed plan to monitor compliance with the minimization and mitigation measures; and 5) provide a description of the funding source and level of funding available for implementation of the minimization and mitigation measures. Projects resulting in impacts to listed species subject to CESA often require avoidance of occupied habitat and/or acquisition of appropriate mitigation habitat as determined by the Department. The Department can provide a complete list of required Incidental Take Permit application components upon request.

4

Species listed as threatened or endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act also require consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW). Additional authorization such as an incidental take permit or biological opinion may be required by the USFW for take of federal-listed species or their occupied habitat.

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4. MM-BIO.18: States that "The two-striped garter snake is not formally listed but considered a special-status species worthy of measures to avoid and minimize impacts to the extent feasible. Projects within the range and within suitable habitat for the two-striped garter snake shall conduct surveys in accordance with the best professional judgment of a qualified biologist. Preconstruction surveys of project impact areas shall be required to salvage and relocate individual two-striped garter snakes out of harms. Following removal of individuals, construction areas shall be fenced with temporary exclusionary silt fencing."

a. The two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondi*), is a California species of special concern (CSC). Additionally, other species classified as CSC or plant species listed under California Native Plant Society (CNPS) as 1B or Rare by the Department within the SCAG area of influence that may be impacted by RTP project implementation should be considered significant. CSC and 1B or Rare-listed plant species meet the definition of rare, threatened or endangered for the purposes of impact analysis, avoidance and mitigation measure consideration under CEQA (CEQA Guidelines 5065). Adverse impacts to CSC could require a mandatory finding of significance by the Lead Agency under CEQA unless impacts are avoided or reduced below significant levels, (CEQA Guidelines 15065). The Department can provide a list of California species of special concern and 1B-listed or rare plant species upon request. Project applicants should consult with the Department as to appropriate survey methods, avoidance, salvage and mitigation measures. If avoidance is not feasible, on site and/or off site protection of appropriate mitigation lands in perpetuity should be secured for these species.

5. MM-BIO.20: States that " No more than two weeks before construction in any given milepost, a survey for burrows and burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia*), shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within 500 feet of the project (assuming available authorized access). The survey will conform to the protocol described by the California Burrowing Owl Consortium (1993)..."

a. Burrowing owls may use a site for breeding, wintering, foraging, and/or migration stop overs and may be found not only in undeveloped areas of wild expanse but also vacant lots or other fragmented areas within suburban areas. The Department recommends that burrowing owl surveys conform to the Department's 1995 *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* as well as the Burrowing Owl Consortium's 1993 *Burrowing Owl Protocol and Mitigation Guideline*, both of which recommend habitat land acquisition and protection in perpetuity for project-related loss of occupied wintering and breeding habitat for burrowing owl. Loss of habitat within burrowing owl range is responsible for local extirpations for this species in many parts of the planning area. The above-referenced staff report and guidelines may be provided by the Department upon request.

6. MM-BIO. 21: States that "MM-BIO.21: When working within 100 feet of salt or brackish marshland presence for the California black rail, California clapper rail, and Yuma clapper rail shall be assumed for either species during the period February 1- August 31 and construction shall be scheduled to begin no earlier than September 1 and end no later than January 31 to avoid potential impact on reproduction."

a. The Department concurs with project measures designed to avoid take of protected bird species. Fish and Game Code Section 5050 classifies California clapper rail (*Rallus longirostris obsoletus*), California black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus*), light-footed clapper rail (*Rallus longirostris levipes*), and Yuma clapper rail (*Rallus longirostris yumaensis*) as CDFG "fully protected". Impacts to these abovementioned species shall be avoided. Fish and Game Code Section 5050 dealing with fully protected bird species states that these species "...may not be taken or possessed at any time and no provision of this code or any other law shall be construed to authorize the issuance of permits or licenses to take any fully protected species,." Additionally, California clapper rail, light-footed clapper rail, and Yuma clapper rail are federally-

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listed as endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) of 1973. The Department of Fish and Game (Department) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service should be consulted when projects identify occupied habitat or habitat capable of supporting California clapper rail, light-footed clapper rail, and Yuma clapper rail.

7 cont.

7. MM BIO-25: States that "Trees with unoccupied raptor nests (large stick nests or cavities) shall only be removed prior to March 1, or following the nesting season. A survey to identify active raptor nests shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than two weeks before the start of construction at project sites from March 1 through July 30."

a. Preconstruction avoidance surveys for raptor species should take place between February 1 and August 31 as some raptor species commence nesting during winter and may be impacted by project activities if disturbances occur without surveys being conducted during this time. The Department recommends adherence to the following measures to assist in the avoidance of unauthorized take of not only raptors but all native bird species protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act:

Migratory nongame native bird species are protected by international treaty under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 (50 C.F.R. Section 10.13). Sections 3503, 3503.5 and 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibit take of all birds and their active nests including raptors and other migratory nongame birds (as listed under the Federal MBTA).

Proposed project activities (including disturbances to native and non-native vegetation, structures and substrates) should take place outside of the breeding bird season which generally runs from March 1- August 31 (as early as February 1 for raptors) to avoid take (including disturbances which would cause abandonment of active nests containing eggs and/or young). Take means to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture or kill (Fish and Game Code Section 86).

8

If avoidance of the breeding bird season is not feasible, the Department recommends that beginning thirty days prior to the disturbance of suitable nesting habitat the project proponent should arrange for weekly bird surveys to detect protected native birds occurring in the habitat that is to be removed and any other such habitat within 300 feet of the construction work area (within 500 feet for raptors) as access to adjacent areas allows. The surveys should be conducted by a qualified biologist with experience in conducting breeding bird surveys. The surveys should continue on a weekly basis with the last survey being conducted no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of clearance/construction work. If a protected native bird is found, the project proponent should delay all clearance/construction disturbance activities within 300 feet of suitable nesting habitat (within 500 feet for suitable raptor nesting habitat) until August 31. Alternatively, the qualified biologist could continue the surveys in order to locate any nests. If an active nest is located, clearing and construction within 300 feet of the nest (within 500 feet for raptor nests) or as determined by a qualified biological monitor, must be postponed until the nest is vacated and juveniles have fledged and when there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting. Limits of construction to avoid a nest should be established in the field with flagging and stakes or construction fencing marking the protected area 300 feet (or 500 feet) from the nest. Construction personnel should be instructed on the sensitivity of the area. The project proponent should record the results of the recommended protective measures described above to document compliance with applicable State and Federal laws pertaining to the protection of native birds.

8. Impacts to Bat Species - The impact analysis and mitigation discussion in the PEIR should include a discussion on bat species. Bats are considered non-game mammals and are afforded protection by state law from take and/or harassment, (Fish and Game Code Section 4150,

9



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California Code of Regulations, Section 251.1). The Department considers several bat species as CSC. Special status bat species may utilize hollow cores and exfoliating bark of trees and may be found beneath the palm fronds of palm trees. Bats may also utilize caves, crevices in rocks and cliff faces, and joints in man-made bridge structures and other building substrates that may be impacted by activities conducted under SCAG RTP project implementation. The Department recommends avoiding disturbances to bat roosting and nursery habitat between March 1 and September 15 to avoid the breeding season for bats unless preconstruction surveys are conducted by a qualified biologist and no bat roosts or nurseries are found within the project area. Mitigation for the unavoidable loss of bat roosting and nursery habitat may include creation of habitat within newly constructed or renovated bridge structures, replacing appropriate tree species of adequate-sized trees providing bat habitat, and the installation of bat boxes to create additional habitat on a project-by-project basis depending on the level of impact.

9 cont.

9. MM BIO-26: States that "Individual transportation projects included in the 2008 RTP shall conduct site-specific analyses of opportunities to preserve or improve habitat linkages with areas on and off-site. Mitigation banking (opportunities to purchase, maintain, and/or restore offsite habitat) is one opportunity that project proponents and jurisdictions may pursue." Additionally, MM BIO-28 states that "Individual transportation projects shall include analysis of wildlife corridors during project planning. Impacts to these corridors shall be avoided and/or minimized."

a. The Department recognizes the importance of analyzing project impacts to wildlife corridors during planning for each individual transportation project. The Department further recommends wildlife movement impact analysis on a broader and cumulative impact analysis scale. This will assist in avoiding adverse impacts from linear projects that have potential for impacts on a broader scale, or projects that may impact critical narrow choke points that could reduce function of recognized movement corridors on a larger scale. A comprehensive analysis is very important since the expenditure of public resources to acquire lands within identified movement corridors may be compromised by one poorly placed project within a wildlife corridor or linkage.

10

10. Impact 3.3-3: States that "The 2008 RTP includes new transportation facilities that could increase near-road human disturbances such as litter, trampling, light pollution and road noise in previously relatively inaccessible and undisturbed natural areas." MM BIO-30 states that "Individual transportation projects shall minimize vehicular accessibility to areas beyond the actual transportation surface. This can be accomplished through fencing and signage. MM BIO-31 states that "Each project shall establish litter control programs in appropriate areas, such as trash receptacles at road turnouts and viewpoints." MM BIO-32 states that "Each project shall use road noise minimization methods, such as brush and tree planting, at heavy noise-producing transportation areas that might affect wildlife. Native vegetation should be used."

11a

a. The project may result in the introduction of invasive non native plant species into inaccessible and undisturbed natural areas and increased ignition sources from vehicles and human sources, which may result in the type conversion of native vegetative communities into non-native ruderal habitats of reduced biological diversity. These impacts are common along major transportation corridors and should be discussed in the PEIR as significant under CEQA. Appropriate mitigation measures could include avoiding new RTP transportation facilities within areas not presently exposed to such impacts and/or assessing the area of native habitats to be lost to proximity to a transportation facility and securing acquisition and protection in perpetuity of replacement habitat at a quality of equal or superior value.

b. The PDEIR should discuss direct and cumulative project-induced impacts from the increase of nitrogen oxide (NOx) pollutants derived from the significant increase of motor vehicles and other growth inducing NOx sources that will be accommodated by implementation of the RTP.

11b

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The deposition of atmospheric NOx pollutants is a contributor to increased levels of nitrogen-based nutrients in soils and induces the growth of invasive exotic vegetation into areas which normally support low nutrient levels such as serpentine grasslands. Increases of exotic annual vegetation resulting from increased soil fertility may increase the risk and intensity of wildfires into vegetative communities which are not fire adapted. This can result in detrimental effects to vegetative communities and rare plants which have a competitive advantage for surviving on low nutrient level soils. Increased deposition of atmospheric NOx into drainages may also contribute to eutrophication of aquatic ecosystems resulting in reduction of biodiversity and function.

11b cont.

c. All refuse containers provided at rest stops or otherwise should be provided with mechanisms which prevent scavenging animals from gaining access to the contents of such containers.

11c

11. MM BIO-42: States that "When individual projects include unavoidable losses of riparian or aquatic habitat, adjacent or nearby riparian or aquatic habitat shall be enhanced (e.g. through removal of non-native invasive wetland species and replacement with more ecologically valuable native species)."

a. The Department opposes the elimination of watercourses (including concrete channels) and/or the canalization of natural and manmade drainages or conversion to subsurface drains. All wetlands and watercourses, whether intermittent, ephemeral, or perennial, should be retained and provided with substantial setbacks which preserve the riparian and aquatic habitat values and maintain their value to on-site and off-site wildlife populations. The Department recommends a minimum natural buffer of 100 feet from the outside edge of the riparian zone on each side of a drainage.

b. The Department requires a Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA), pursuant to Section 1600 et seq. of the Fish and Game Code, with the applicant prior to any direct or indirect impact to a lake or stream bed, bank or channel or associated riparian resources. The Department's issuance of a SAA may be a project that is subject to CEQA. To facilitate our issuance of the Agreement when CEQA applies, the Department as a responsible agency under CEQA may consider the local jurisdiction's (lead agency) document for the project. To minimize additional requirements by the Department under CEQA the document should fully identify the potential impacts to the lake, stream or riparian resources and provide adequate avoidance, mitigation, monitoring and reporting commitments for issuance of the Agreement. Early consultation is recommended, since modification of the proposed project may be required to avoid or reduce impacts to fish and wildlife resources.

12

Please include the above concerns and comments into the final PEIR for the subject project. Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment. Please contact Ms. Kelly Schmoker, Staff Environmental Scientist at (626) 335-4369 or Mr. Scott Harris, Environmental Scientist, at (626) 797-3170 if you should have any questions and for further coordination.

Sincerely,



Edmund J. Pert  
Regional Manager  
South Coast Region

cc: Mr. Curt Taucher, Los Alamitos

Ms. Kirchner  
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**COMMENT LETTER 4**

Ms. Terri Dickerson, Laguna Niguel  
Ms. Betty Courtney  
bcc: Mr. Scott Harris, Pasadena  
HabCon-Chron, Department of Fish and Game  
State Clearinghouse, Sacramento

EP:sph

*Spharris/SCAG RTP PEIR /2008*

## COMMENT LETTER 5

**From:** Jessica Meaney  
**Sent:** Monday, January 28, 2008 9:59 AM  
**To:** Jessica Kirchner  
**Cc:** Sofia Lo; Ryan Kuo  
**Subject:** FW: the Draft RTP 2008 and PEIR

fyi - I will log the entire email in CMS

-----Original Message-----

From: Tony Van Haagen [mailto:tony\_van\_haagen@dot.ca.gov]  
Sent: Friday, January 25, 2008 3:16 PM  
To: Naresh Amatya  
Cc: Jessica Meaney; David Sosa; edward\_humenik; Chao Wei  
Subject: the Draft RTP 2008 and PEIR

Naresh,

I have some comments regarding the Draft 2008 RTP and the Draft PEIR.

On Chapter 3-14\_Transportation.pdf 3. ( Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures 3.14 Transportation of the PEIR):

(1) Various tables 3.14-2, 3.14-3 etc. refer to the SCAG 2007 Regional Travel Demand Model for existing (2008) data. The SCAG model has 2003 as base year. The numbers in the tables must refer to that base year unless model runs were conducted with SED and network data for 2008. If that is the case that should be explicitly stated. In any case the word 'existing' should be dropped. 1

(2) In Tables 3.14-11, 3.14-12, 3.14-13, 3.14-14 there is reference to the base year 2008. There is no Travel Demand Model base year 2008. There is only a base year 2003. In Table 3.14-11 2035 'No Project' I presume is the same as what is called 'NoBuild' in the Transportation Conformity Report. Consistent terminology should be used throughout the RTP. 2

(3) On page 3.14-29 there is a reference to the SCAG.( 2007). 2003 Model Validation Summary of the Regional Transportation Model. I am only aware of the Draft SCAG 2003 Model Validation Report, dated May 2007. A final validation report is still not available. Since May there have been ongoing changes in the base year model and the final model may be released any time soon according to Guoxiong at the MTF meeting. last Wednesday. I have attached my comments of June 2007 on that draft report and I hope that these and other comments by travel demand modelers will be incorporated in the final validation report. 3

The section on Growth in GROWTH.PDF gives a detailed description of the 4Ds Land Use/Transportation Model analysis. In Table C5 on page 74 the Model Plan VMT for the region is 493,304,163. This number differs greatly from the 2035 Plan VMT for the region in Table 3.14-11 which is 551.6 million.

How are we to explain this difference? It is possible that the HDV VMT is excluded. The L&MD VMT for the 2035 Plan is given as 499,897,665 on page 22 of CONFORMITY.PDF which still differs but not that much. The total Plan VMT in this document is 548,232,112.

On page 72 of GROWTH.PDF there are two tables C3. The second one is presumably table C4. On page 73 second column to the phrase ' , shown in column four' the phrase 'of Table C3' should be added. The tables do not have a reference to a particular year. Is it the 2035 Plan scenario?

The total base year 2003 VMT is 408,641,005, the plan 2008 Plan total is 422,776,953 on page 21 of the Transportation Conformity Report. The 2008 Base Year(?) VMT is given as 429.2 million in Table 3.14-11. What do these year 2008 numbers really refer

to?

## COMMENT LETTER 5

On page 171 of the Draft\_2008RTP.pdf it says that the 4Ds strategies have not been incorporated into the 2008 RTP performance results. So I assume that the above VMT totals have not been obtained by 4D post processing.

3 cont

Obviously the various parts of the draft RTP have different authors. Hence we get different numbers for the same totals. In the final RTP these differences should not appear and a consistent terminology should be used to refer to them.

In the document CONFORMITY.PDF on page 7 there also is a reference to the SCAG 2003 Model Validation Report of May 2007. SCAG notes on that page that at the Modeling Task Force meetings regionally significant modeling issues are being discussed. It should be noted that no definitive information has been provided yet on the details of the future year forecasts. This is in fact hard to do as the Transcad software has been shown to give different answers for model runs with exactly the same input.

4

This problem was discovered in September 2007. Hopefully the new Transcad 5.0 version will resolve the software issues. Caltrans has not received this version yet from Caliper corporation. Once these problems have been resolved Caltrans and other agencies should be given the opportunity to run some of the future year scenarios. Only then do we know precisely how the model runs were performed. The more experts look at the model the more likely it is that problems will be avoided in the future.

Tony Van Haagen  
Caltrans, District 7  
213 897-1342

## COMMENT LETTER 6



# South Coast Air Quality Management District

21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765-4182  
(909) 396-2000 • [www.aqmd.gov](http://www.aqmd.gov)

February 19, 2008

Ms. Jessica Kirchner  
Southern California Association of Governments  
Environmental Planning Division  
818 West Seventh Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3435

Dear Ms. Kirchner:

**Draft 2008 Regional Transportation Plan Program  
Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR)  
(January 2008)**

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above-mentioned document. The following comments are meant as guidance for the Lead Agency and should be incorporated in the Final Environmental Impact Report.

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21092.5, please provide the SCAQMD with written responses to all comments contained herein prior to the certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report. The SCAQMD would be available to work with the Lead Agency to address these issues and any other questions that may arise. Please call me at (909) 396-3054 if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely

*Steve Smith*

Steve Smith., Ph.D.  
Program Supervisor  
Planning, Rule Development & Area Sources

Attachment

SS:JK:CB

LACO80108-05  
Control Number

**Draft 2008 Regional Transportation Plan Program  
Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR)**

1. **Construction Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** In Appendix B, the lead agency states that construction greenhouse gas emissions were calculated, in part, using the URBEMIS2007 model. The lead agency notes that the URBEMIS2007 model has limitations based on project size and does not proportionally adjust the fleet mix for large projects. As a result, the lead agency assumed an average project size of 100 dwelling units or 250,000 square feet of commercial development. The average project size was then modeled using URBEMIS2007, model defaults were used, and then the results were multiplied by the number of average-sized projects expected in each county. Staff was unable to verify the results because the URBEMIS2007 output reports were not included in Appendix B. Further, the assumptions regarding the number of average-sized projects for each county were also not included. Further, this analysis appears to exclude GHG emissions associated with construction of roadway and other transportation improvement projects, which appear to comprise a large portion of the 2008 RTP. The lead agency should provide more detail in the final PEIR with regard to the URBEMIS2007 output reports, assumptions used, and indicate whether or not construction emissions from roadway improvement projects were included in the overall results.

1

2. In the SCAQMD's 1/25/08 comment letter on the 2008 RTP from the SCAQMD's Executive Officer to SCAG's Executive Director, the SCAQMD notes that the 2008 RTP relies heavily on the benefits of accelerated upgrades to Tier 4 diesel locomotives. While substantial emission reductions can be achieved from Tier 4 engines, even greater emission reductions of NOx and particulate matter can be achieved through rail electrification and other zero emission technologies. SCAQMD staff, therefore, recommends that rail electrification and other zero emission technologies be evaluated, either as part of the 2008 RTP or as an alternative.

2

Similarly, any projects that include increasing rail capacity should include developing more on-dock rail of sorted and unsorted containers at the ports. The SCAQMD is concerned about locating new rail yards in existing residential communities. Therefore, unsorted containers should be taken to new rail yards outside of the region in areas where there are no residential communities. SCAQMD staff recommends that these concepts either be evaluated, either as part of the 2008 RTP or as an alternative.

**Health Risk Assessment**

The following comments are based on information provided in the draft PEIR. SCAQMD staff requested additional information to clarify specific components of the analysis, but did not receive the requested information before the end of the public comment period.

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3. In Appendix B, the lead agency identifies the limitations of preparing a health risk assessment for such an extensive freeway system with a horizon year of 2035. The health risk assessment, therefore, appears to be designed similar to a CO hot spots analysis where CO concentrations are estimated at the most impacted intersections for the existing setting, initial implementation year and a future date where traffic patterns have stabilized. Specifically, the lead agency chose a freeway segment in each county within its jurisdiction based on the highest traffic volumes. There are several potential problems with this approach as explained in the following paragraphs.

3

First, although the freeway segments modeled were those experiencing the highest traffic levels, it is not clear if they represent the highest cancer risk. Other factors that influence risk include meteorology and distance to the nearest receptors. It is not clear if these factors were taken into consideration.

Second, it appears that the analysis assumed that the freeways would maintain the current configurations, e.g., width. A number of recent roadway and freeway improvement projects include road widening, which brings the roadways and, therefore, traffic closer to receptors. It is assumed that future roadway improvement projects would also include widening the roadways through adding additional lanes. As a result, the distance to the potential receptors would be reduced, thus, potentially increasing cancer risk.

Further, the RTP, as a comprehensive transportation program, also includes rail transport systems, high speed regional transport (HSRT) and the Compass Blueprint Growth Vision that lays out principles that seek to integrate land use and transportation with the goals of accommodating an expected six million additional residences by 2035. The health risk assessment does not appear to assess health risks from these components. As indicated in the SCAQMD's 1/25/08 comment letter on the 2008 RTP to SCAG's Executive Director, although the 2008 RTP calls for deployment of U.S. EPA Tier 4 locomotives in the region, the proposed standards would not occur until after 2015 and they do not require railroad operators to replace existing locomotives.

Similarly, to the extent that the Compass two percent development occurs in areas disproportionately close to diesel emission sources, including diesel locomotives, adverse health impacts may result.

It is unclear that the health risk assessment has addressed the above issues. SCAQMD staff requests that the above elements be analyzed and mitigated to the maximum extent feasible.

4. It is not clear how the emission factors used in the health risk assessment were developed. It appears that BURDEN emission factors from EMFAC2007 were used, since the screening risk assessment text states that the emissions were divided by VMT. BURDEN generates three emission factors (run, idle and start) for each

4



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pollutant. The text in the Screening Risk Assessment of Sample Selected Projects Included in the Southern California Association of Governments' Draft 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (text) states that starting idling emission factors were not included, which implies that EMFAC emission factors were used instead of BURDEN. Detailed documentation should be provided that specifically states which emission module of EMFAC2007 was used (BURDEN or EMFAC). The documentation should state specifically which emission factors were used (run, idle, start for BURDEN; running exhaust, hot soak, etc. for EMFAC).

4 cont.

Since adequate documentation was not provided, the emission factors could not be verified. An example EMFAC2007 output and description of which emission factors were used from the output should be included in the documentation for the Final PEIR.

5. The emission rates in the air dispersion model were adjusted for time of day variations in the traffic volume in the air dispersion model. It is not clear if this was appropriate.

5

BURDEN generates daily average emission factors. Multiplying the BURDEN emission factors by the daily average traffic volume generates daily average emission rates. If BURDEN emission factors were used, adjustment for time of day variations in traffic volume would not be appropriate.

EMFAC generates speed rated emission factors (i.e., emission factors are generated for a specific vehicle speed). Traffic volume is typically inversely proportional to vehicle speed. If EMFAC emission factors were used, then the emission factors should change with traffic volume to reflect the reduction in speed. If speed rated EMFAC emission factors were used, documentation for the Final PEIR should demonstrate that the adjustment for time of day variations in traffic volume were appropriate. If BURDEN emission factors were used, then the adjustment for time of day variations in traffic volume are not appropriate and the air dispersion modeling should be revised in the final PEIR and appropriate documentation provided.

6. It is not clear from the text which specific EMFAC2007 categories (LDT1, LDT2, MDV, HHDT, etc.) were used with which specific MOBILE6 categories. An example of how the emission factors from EMFAC2007 and MOBILE6 emission factors for toxics were developed that shows how the categories were matched should be included with the documentation for the Final PEIR.

6

7. The text states that carcinogenic pollutant emissions for each modeling each modeling analysis were converted to equivalent units of cancer risk and distributed uniformly over each area source. This could not be verified. The CONCUNIT parameter is listed as 1,000,000 (GRAMS/SEC) with an output in (MICROGRAMS/CUBIC-METER) in the air dispersion input file. Table 4 Fleet-wide Composite Risk Emission Factor for 2035 Baseline I-405 NB Mixed-Use Link presents a risk emission factor of 2.61E-6 g-risk/mi-ug/m3. Since the emission rate in

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ISCST3 is in units per time, there is a time factor that prevents verification of the emission rates. The Final PEIR should document how the exact emission rate input into the air dispersion model was developed.

7 cont.

8. The text states that the SCAQMD 1981 meteorological files were used. The meteorological file for Los Alamitos listed in the input file is LOSALAMS.ASC. The SCAQMD met file is named LOSALAM.ASC. Because of the name difference it is not clear if SCAQMD 1981 meteorological files were used.

8

9. Review of the modeling analysis indicates that the missing data processing routine was used. The SCAQMD recommends for typical dispersion modeling within the SCAQMD's jurisdiction that the missing data processing routine parameter should not be used.

9

10. Review of the modeling analysis indicates that the WINDCATS parameters were used. The SCAQMD recommends for typical dispersion modeling within the SCAQMD's jurisdiction that the WINDCATS parameters should not be used.

10

11. A summary of the highest concentrations and health risk for valid receptors for each run was not completed. Some of the receptors appear to overlap the area sources. Also it is not clear which receptors are residential. A summary of the highest concentrations and health risk for valid receptors for each air dispersion run should be included in the documentation for the Final PEIR.

11

12. It is not clear why only health risks to residential receptors reported. Worker health risk should also be reported in the Final PEIR.

12

13. It is unclear what is represented by Table 6 "Increased Cancer Risk at Maximum Exposed Residence from Vehicle Operation by Planning Scenario and Freeway Corridor." Typically, there is no increased cancer risk from the existing setting, but a total existing cancer risk. It is unclear what increased cancer risk from the existing setting means (i.e., the 2008 existing setting). Typically the health risk from the project at the existing setting would be zero. So, it appears that the total health risk is reported in Table 6 and should be labeled as such.

13

Based on the title, it appears that the incremental health risk from the 2035 scenarios is the difference between the 2035 scenarios and the 2008 existing setting. However, since the existing setting health risk appears to be total health risk, it is possible that the 2035 health risks in Table 6 are also total health risk instead of incremental cancer risk as stated in the title. If this assertion is correct, Table 6 should be corrected in the Final PEIR to identify which cancer health risks are total health risks and which are incremental health risks. It would be even clearer if a table with total health risk from the existing setting and each project scenario is presented and a second table is included that presents the incremental increase or decrease in health risk from the proposed project compared to the existing setting.

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February 19, 2008

14. The DPEIR compares the health risk values of the future planning scenarios, but does not provide a discussion on why the health risk values vary between the planning scenarios. There should be a sufficiently detailed discussion in the Final PEIR regarding what contributes to the differences in the future planning scenarios that would lead to different traffic volumes, which would cause increased health risk. The discussion should describe which scenario better achieves the project objectives and benefits in each future planning scenario. The additional detail should be added, since it is possible that a scenario may generate benefits that could cause decision makers to choose it over another scenario with less health risks that does not achieve as many benefits. As presented, the analysis does not provide enough information for the public to determine how each alternative's parameters contribute or reduce health risk in relation to the parameters in the other alternatives. 14
15. **Conformity:** The conformity determination includes projects that do not show full funding. According to federal guidelines, all projects included in the conformity analysis must show reasonable funding for the duration of the project life, i.e. Caltrans Rte. 5 HOV/Truck lanes project which has approx. \$500,000 of committed funding – this is a \$400 billion project; High Desert Corridor Toll Project has been identified as requiring a joint public/private partnership, needing some type of funding commitments. If the RTP is not accepted and subsequently approved with the above types of projects modeled, is there a contingency plan with alternative projects which can be funded with the current funding sources that are committed and available? 15
16. **Project Specific Analysis:** The SCAQMD understands that the level of detail of the analysis in a program EIR is not as great as the level of detail of the project-specific analysis for the projects that follow. Therefore, The SCAQMD looks forward to reviewing the CEQA documents for the individual projects that comprise the 2008 RTP. 16

## COMMENT LETTER 7

**MWD**

METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

*Executive Office*

February 19, 2008

**Via Electronic & U.S. Mail**

Ms. Jessica Kirchner  
Senior Regional Planner  
Southern California Association of Governments  
818 West Seventh Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3435

Dear Ms. Kirchner:

Notice of Availability of a  
Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) has received a copy of the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR) for the 2008 Regional Transportation Program (RTP). The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the State lead agency for the preparation of this Draft PEIR. The 2008 RTP is a long-range regional transportation plan that provides a blueprint to help achieve a coordinated and balanced regional transportation system in the SCAG region, which consists of six counties: Imperial, Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura. Metropolitan appreciates the opportunity to review SCAG's Draft PEIR and provide input for the preparation of this document.

Metropolitan agrees with SCAG's Draft Program Environmental Impact Report concerning the importance of adequately planning water supplies to meet anticipated population increases. It is this factor which has caused Metropolitan and its member agencies to assume a leading role in regional water infrastructure development, water quality, groundwater management, water use efficiency, recycling and imported supply. These and other planning are core issues addressed by Metropolitan's Regional Water Use Plan and by its Integrated Resource Plan. Similar planning documents by Metropolitan's member agencies contribute to a more comprehensive picture of Southern California's water needs and diversified resource development while remaining sensitive to the environmental impacts of these developments. While Metropolitan supports SCAG's role in facilitating information sharing, it also agrees with SCAG's assertion that the task of estimating, planning, and providing for regional water needs is the central role of the water agencies operating within the SCAG region.

1

## COMMENT LETTER 7

Ms. Jessica Kirchner

Page 2


February 19, 2008

In a related vein, many of the mitigation measures discussed in the PEIR and intended to ensure a sufficient long-term water supply call for actions that are outside SCAG's jurisdiction. These include requiring water agencies to consider climate change on water supply, including conjunctive use as a water management strategy, and reducing water use. While these types of issues are core concerns at Metropolitan and among its member agencies, SCAG's role in these areas should be information shared through their Water Policy Task Force.

2

Metropolitan appreciates the opportunity to provide input to your planning process and we look forward to receiving future documentation on this project. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Brenda S. Marines at (213) 217-7902.

Very truly yours,



Delaine W. Shane

Manager, Environmental Planning Team

BSM/bsm

(Public Folders/EPU/Letters/14-FEB08B.doc – Jessica Kirchner, 2008 Regional Transportation Plan)

## COMMENT LETTER 8

---

**From:** Bodenchak, John [JBODENCHAK@dpw.lacounty.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 05, 2008 5:36 PM  
**To:** Jessica Kirchner  
**Cc:** Hamamoto, Bruce  
**Subject:** Draft 2008 RTP PEIR  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Dear Ms. Kirchner:

The Los Angeles County Flood Control District has the following comments on the draft 2008 Regional Transportation Plan Program EIR.

Page 3.15-9

(page 573 in the pdf)

*Major cities include Acton, Santa Clarita, Fillmore, Santa Paula, venture, and Oxnard."*

Acton is not a city, it is an unincorporated community of Los Angeles County. "Venture" should be "Ventura."

1

Page 3.15-30

(page 594 in the pdf)

There is no single "Santa Clarita Water Reclamation Plant." Two water reclamation plants are located in Santa Clarita: the Saugus WRP and the Valencia WRP.

2

If you have any questions please feel free to call me at (626) 458-4370.

Thank you,

John Bodenchak  
 Watershed Management Division  
 LA County Department of Public Works

## COMMENT LETTER 9

---

**From:** Darren Hill [dhill@soboba-nsn.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 10, 2008 2:39 PM  
**To:** Jessica Kirchner  
**Subject:** Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan

Hello Jessica,

My name is Darren Hill; I work for the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians in the Cultural Resources Department. I have received the information on the draft 2008 Regional transportation plan the comments that Soboba has are the cultural resources that any construction that might be disturbed, and want to participate in helping preserve the cultural resources. We want to see all the archeological research records, and if construction near site we will want a Native American Monitor to be present during construction and if there are any unanticipated finds we would want to be notified immediately. If there are any questions please contact me at [dhill@soboba-nsn.gov](mailto:dhill@soboba-nsn.gov) or my cell (951) 663-5279.

Sincerely Darren Hill

1



**Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District**

14306 Park Avenue, Victorville, CA 92392-2310

760.245.1661 • fax 760.245.2699

Visit our web site: <http://www.mdaqmd.ca.gov>

Eldon Heaston, Executive Director

January 16, 2008

Jessica Kirchner, Senior Regional Planner

SCAG

818 W. Seventh St., 12<sup>th</sup> Fl.

Los Angeles, CA 90017

**RE: PEIR - RTP**

Dear Ms Kirchner:

The Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (District) has reviewed the notice of preparation for the programmatic environmental impact report for the regional transportation plan.

Based on our review of the notice and on the information available to us at this time, we have no comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this planning document. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at (760) 245-1661, extension 6726, or Roseana Navarro-Brasington at extension 5706.

Sincerely,

  
**Alan J. De Salvio**

Supervising Air Quality Engineer

RNB/AJD

SCAG\_PEIR\_RTP011608





## COMMENT LETTER 11

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February 19, 2008

Ms. Jessica Kirchner  
Southern California Association of Governments  
818 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3435

Dear Ms. Kirchner:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has reviewed the PEIR, and has the following comments:

- Page ES-7 and 1-3: The description of the No Project Alternative does not state which growth forecast is paired with the reasonably foreseeable transportation projects. 1
- Page ES-46: The PEIR states that the potential for inconsistencies between the 2008 RTP and currently adopted local land-use plans and policies is deemed a significant impact. OCTA believes the 2008 RTP should be based on locally adopted land-use plans and policies, and that the 2008 RTP growth forecast should be consistent with locally approved demographic forecasts, namely Orange County Projections 2006. 2
- Page 1-4: OCTA has requested that the Orangeline Magnetic Levitation project (Orangeline Maglev) be removed from the constrained plan of the 2008 RTP. While the PEIR states that the Orangeline Maglev "was not included in the detailed GIS mapping and quantitative modeling for the 2008 RTP," the Orangeline Maglev is included in SCAG's draft 2008 RTP list of modeled projects. Please ensure that all references to the Orangeline Maglev are removed from the final PEIR and list of modeled projects for the 2008 RTP. 3
- Map 2.1-10 (2035 Grade Separation Projects in Orange County): The map is missing the Raymond Avenue grade separation project in the City of Fullerton, as well as all the grade separations planned on the Metrolink right-of-way between the cities of Anaheim and Irvine, including Ball Road, State College Boulevard, 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Santa Ana Boulevard, Grand Avenue, Redhill Avenue, Jeffrey Road, and Sand Canyon Avenue. 4

## COMMENT LETTER 11

Jessica Kirchner  
February 19, 2008  
Page 2

- Section 3.2 (Air Quality): Since an Air Quality Technical Study was undertaken, consider including it in the reference section.
- Page 3.2-31: OCTA recommends including a brief discussion of the screening assessment that led to the conclusion that the project-specific cancer risk would exceed the threshold of one in 1 million.
- Page 3.2-32: OCTA recommends an expanded discussion that the overall cancer risk is expected to decrease dramatically (Table 3.2-9) as compared to the existing 2008 scenario.
- Page 3.2-40: Would greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions still be expected to increase under the 2008 RTP due to increased vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in light of the expected improvements in Partial Zero Emission Vehicle and Zero Emission Vehicle technologies?
- Page 3.2-41: Table 3.2-17 provides SCAG's estimate of GHG emissions by county for 2008, 2020, and 2035. These estimates do not include all sources of GHG emissions. SCAG proposes that the PEIR be used for tiering purposes. An inadequate or misleading estimate of Orange County GHGs could be carried forward into future project-level environmental impact reports.
- Page 3.5-17: OCTA recommends including a reference to the Pier Pass Program, which was designed to improve operations and air quality in and around the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.
- Page 3.14-5: In Table 3.14-2, Riverside County's percent of regional AM peak-period VMT should be 11 percent, rather than 1 percent. Also, Orange County's percent of daily regional vehicle hours of travel (VHT) should be more than 1 percent based on the data presented.
  - In Table 3.14-3, Orange County's existing daily vehicle hours of delay seem too high compared with OCTA's 2006 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). SCAG should reevaluate this data.

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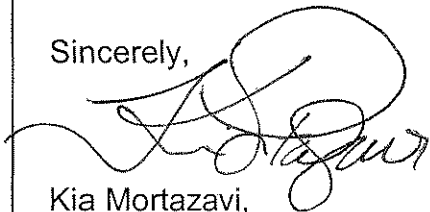
## COMMENT LETTER 11

Jessica Kirchner  
February 19, 2008  
Page 3

- Page 3.14-24: In Table 3.14-12, consider titling the table "Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay (VHD) in 2008 and 2035 (in millions)." Also consider changing the subtitles to VHD, rather than "vehicle hours of travel in delay."
  - The top section of Table 3.14-12 refers to "person hours of delay," while the title refers to VHT in delay. These are not the same statistics and should not be mixed.
  - In Table 3.14-12, assuming the values in the table refer to daily VHD, Orange County's values show no improvement over the No Build alternative; whereas, OCTA's 2006 LRTP demonstrates a 37 percent reduction in delay over the No Build scenario.
- Page 3.14-26: In Table 3.14-13, Orange County's percentage of evening work trips completed within 45 minutes by auto seems incorrect when compared with Riverside County.

If you have further questions regarding these comments, please contact Michael Litschi, Section Manager of Long-Range Strategies, at (714) 560-5581.

Sincerely,



Kia Mortazavi,  
Executive Director, Development

KM:ml



CALIFORNIA RESOURCES AGENCY

# San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

February 19, 2008

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US Forest Service

Donald Wolfe  
LA County Public Works

### Executive Officer

Belinda Faustinos

Ms. Jessica Meaney  
Southern California Association of Governments  
818 W. Seventh Street, 12<sup>th</sup> floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

RE: RTP PEIR

Dear Ms. Kirchner:

The Rivers and Mountains Conservancy is grateful of the opportunity to provide comments on the Regional Transportation Plan PEIR.

The San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, or Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) was created in 1999 to preserve urban open space and habitat for the enjoyment of, and appreciation by, present and future generations. The goals of the RMC are described *Common Ground*, the Conservancy's Watershed and Open Space Plan. The Plan presents a simple vision for the future: restore balance between natural and human systems in the watersheds. The centerpiece of the Plan is a series of Guiding Principles that cities, federal, state and local agencies, communities, groups and individuals can use to plan future open space, water resource, and habitat projects. Further information on the RMC is available at our website, [www.rmc.ca.gov](http://www.rmc.ca.gov).

Because a portion of the RMC territory is within the Plan area, the RMC would like to submit the following comments:

Mitigation measures MM BIO-26 thru MM BIO-29 provide insufficient direction to RTP project proponents to mitigate for potential impacts to wildlife corridors. Wildlife corridors require complex analysis of both local and regional biodiversity values for each species that may be impacted. The draft measures listed in the Draft RTP PEIR do not address the potential for cumulative impacts that could result from a limited analysis on a project by project basis. We suggest that the RTP PEIR provide direction that project proponents reference a wildlife corridor authority with sufficient knowledge both regional and local wildlife corridors. SCAG should undertake to act as or assign a monitor to assess the cumulative impacts of the RPT over the full course of its implementation. Organizations such as the South Coast Wildlands Project have participated in the development of the RTP and should be considered as a resource for implementation of the Plan.

1

Rivers and Mountains Conservancy · El Encanto · 100 N. Old San Gabriel Canyon Road · Azusa, CA 91702

Phone: (626) 815-1019 • Fax: (626) 815-1269 • E-mail: [bfaustinos@rmc.ca.gov](mailto:bfaustinos@rmc.ca.gov)

**COMMENT LETTER 12**

MM BIO-27 directs project proponents to provide wildlife crossings/access at locations useful and appropriate for the species of concern. The terms “useful” and “appropriate” are too vague. Crossings need to be designed based on proven standards if they are to successfully mitigate for the impacts on species movement. Likewise, MM BIO 29 should reference a standard for wildlife fencing based on proven design for the impacted species.

2

The Draft PEIR omits reference to buffers between new or upgraded transportation corridors and wildlife corridors. Lighting and noise can severely impact wildlife and buffers should be used to avoid and/or minimize impacts. Where projects will be located in or adjacent to habitat areas, vegetation for buffers should be appropriate to the adjacent vegetation association and plants should be sourced from locally propagated to protect the genetic integrity of the project landscape.

3

MM BIO-39 through 42 directs project proponents to preserve, avoid or replace and restore wetlands. These mitigation measure need to clearly specify what constitutes “specific vegetation that is not to be removed shall be so marked during construction” this vegetation should include both riparian and wetland vegetation. In addition minimizations measures to avoid removal of riparian vegetation were not included; further specific direction should be given to the project proponent on developing minimization measures. “Ratios to ensure no net loss” of wetlands; ratios for replacing wetlands should be clearly stated in order to determine and ensure no net loss of wetlands; although regulatory agencies have established ratios for replacement of wetlands, SCAG should develop ratios for their project proponents in order to ensure the replacement of wetlands occurs at an appropriate level.

4

Correction to Table 3.3-1: Natural Wetlands: This table indicates only 6 acres of wetland have been protected. The table needs to represent the correct amount of protected wetlands. Recently the Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority purchased 68 acres for the protection of wetlands.

5

With regard to the impacts of the Plan on recreation resources, the RMC would like to see that project proponents, as part of their planning, be directed to consult with agencies and organizations with active open space work plans. The RMC continues to plan and fund recreation opportunities in its territory and, in the course of this pursuit, works with many cooperating agencies with similar agendas to leverage opportunities. Multi-use trails and integrated runoff management are just some examples of how RTP projects can creatively interface with agency open space plans. We look forward to a continuing dialog on these opportunities as the Plan becomes implemented.

6

Sincerely,

Belinda V. Faustinos  
Executive Officer



# South Coast Wildlands

PO Box 291473  
Los Angeles, CA 90029  
323.664.1294

## Members of the Board

Dr. Paul Beier  
Northern Arizona University

George Brooks-Gonyer  
San Diego  
Natural History Museum

Pete Dangermond  
Riverside Land Conservancy

Ariana Katovich  
Earth Island Institute

Dr. Esther Rubin  
Conservation Biology Institute

Lynn Sadler  
Mountain Lion Foundation

Dr. Wayne Spencer  
Conservation Biology Institute

Southern California Association of Governments  
818 West Seventh Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

February 21, 2008

RE: Comments on 2008 Regional Transportation Plan

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this plan. I have one comment at this point.

I strongly urge you to include the requirement that any proponent of a project (transportation, housing, etc.) that may have an impact on a South Coast Missing Linkages' designated wildland linkage, or any other wildland linkage, consult with a **regional linkage authority with proven experience in linkage analysis and design**. And, this regional linkage authority should have the ability and power to assess impacts and determine whether a proposed project is inconsistent with the RCP (which, if it is not, should make a transportation proposal ineligible for federal transportation dollars).

1

Again, thank for your work and this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

*Mary Loquvam*

Mary Loquvam  
Executive Director

# Comments by Western Riverside Council of Governments on SCAG 2008 Regional Transportation Plan & EIR

## Document: RTP

**Section or Chapter:** Executive Summary

**Page:** 13

**Comment:** Integrated Land Use - It should be noted that SCAG does not have any land use authority and for SCAG's land use strategies to work greater emphasis needs to be placed on educating local officials and the public on the need to change current land use policies.

**Section or Chapter:** General Comment

**Page:** none

**Comment:** The document should point out the need for preservation of existing vacated right of ways or acquire land for future transit corridors to avoid the land from being developed in to housing or other land uses. This should carry down to non-motorized corridors and not just for fixed rail or bus routes. (Noted the section on page 203 and recommend that this be moved or stated a second time earlier in the document).

**Section or Chapter:** General Comment

**Page:** 9 & 66.

**Comment:** The Minnesota Bridge failure was due to poor engineering and undersized steel plates not because of lack of maintenance.

**Section or Chapter:** Executive Summary

**Page:** 19

**Comment:** The allocation of \$18 billion for high speed freight train system does not make much sense given that that money could be used to implement more and cleaner systems for moving freight. Does the \$18 Billion include all the grade separation needed to make current rail lines usable for a HSRT system?

The RTP plan bases a sizable amount of goods movement and transit on electrification of trains and other modes of transit yet it does not address the additional power needs to supply all these new modes of transportation. The plan should include a section or comment on anticipated energy consumption and new energy facilities planned for construction between now and 2035 to supply these future needs.

**Section or Chapter:** Chapter 2

**Page:** 50

## COMMENT LETTER 14

**Comment:** The RTP notes that the region's population is increasing but the number of households are not increasing at a comparable rate. It is noted that household size is increasing which is attributed to cultural aspects but also due to the lack of affordable housing in job rich areas of the region. Yet the RTP proposes under its Policy Growth Forecast to allocate an additional 300,000 plus population, more than 100,000 households and approximately 60,000 jobs in the areas that can not accommodate their current needs let alone an increase above current levels. It has also been the policy with the past two RHNA cycles to allocate more housing, particularly for lower income levels, to the inland counties. If one is to follow the Policy growth forecast then the inland counties will be over building housing to meet the RHNA requirements and the coastal counties will have only 15 years to accommodate the additional 300,000 population increase stated in the Policy Growth Forecast.

1 cont.

**Section or Chapter:** Chapter 2

**Page:** 52

**Comment:** It is noted that the forecast uses a household size of three persons per household but recent data show household size increasing over the last seven years due to cultural background and lack of affordable housing. Would not this trend continue over the RTP planning period?

**Section or Chapter:** Chapter 2

**Page:** 55

**Comment:** It states that the economic well-being of residents in the region improves during the planning period. It does not seem to account for inflation during the planning period which could have a large impact on the economy and ultimately job growth in certain sectors. Over the last seven years the region's increase in income was only 80% required to keep up with inflation. If you factor in the 3.8% annual rate of inflation over the planning period and incomes rising at 2.4% (currently) then the impact on incomes for the region will be significant.

**Section or Chapter:** Chapter 3

**Page:** 80 under item #10

**Comment:** Suggest that statement read - *SCAG shall support the development of subregional or multi-subregional GIS data centers for local jurisdictions to create and maintain GIS data vital for SCAG to perform regional analysis at a higher level of accuracy.*

**Section or Chapter:** Chapter 3

**Page:** 88

**Comment:** The plan states that future development should 'Ensure access to open space and habitat preservation...' The plan should also call for increasing the amount of open space and habitat in the region to help offset the effects of Green House Gases and to create a higher quality of life for the region's residents.

**Section or Chapter:** Chapter 3

**Page:** 133



## COMMENT LETTER 14

**Comment:** In the discussion on population, housing and land use SCAG notes the impact of new and expanded infrastructure can have on a community and how growth is distributed. Cities, through the general plan land use elements should encourage the development of higher density development around transit nodes like TOD's. This would then encourage transportation agencies to plan and fund projects near higher density zoned areas and help mitigate the impact of growth on a community. As part of the land use mitigation program TOD's, infill/refill and mixed use projects should be considered as a land use to aid in the efficient use of distributing growth.

**Section or Chapter:** Chapter 4

1 cont.

**Page:** 145

**Comment:** Local development mitigation fees for transportation facilities should be mentioned in this section. Over the next 25 years it is estimated that over \$6 billion will be raised in this manner and that more growth impact fees for transportation should be investigated for areas throughout the region.

**Section or Chapter:** Chapter 4

**Page:** 172 and Exhibits 5.2 & 5.3

**Comment:** Under the heading of 'Mobility Benefits Attributable to the Land-Use Strategies' the document references the Baseline and Policy Growth Forecast Alternatives. There is also reference to a Baseline and Plan Freeway Speed analysis. If there is a Policy Alternative why is there no exhibit for this?

**Section or Chapter:** General Comment

**Page:** N/A

**Comment:** Throughout the document SCAG references a number of growth forecasts and alternatives. For example, on page 173 the document references the Policy Growth Alternative and then on page 202 the document discusses the using of the Policy Growth Forecast. It also discusses an Envision Alternative based on the Plan Alternative which is part of the Policy Growth Forecast.

The document should clearly distinguish between the Base Year, Baseline, Plan, Policy and Envision forecasts and alternatives and how each one was developed or what adjustments to another forecast or alternative was made to arrive at the next or final forecast or alternative. A separate section should be devoted to how all these growth forecasts and alternatives can be differentiated from one another. It would be very helpful when they are referenced later in the document.

# Comments by Western Riverside Council of Governments on SCAG 2008 Regional Transportation Plan & DEIR

## Document: Draft 2008 RTP EIR 3.2 Air Quality.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-AQ.3

**Page:**

**Comment:** Apply water or dust suppressant to exposed earth surfaces to control measures.

Language should be added to say “toxic free” dust suppressant. Currently, there are a number of suppressants that contain toxics that if placed on exposed earth surfaces could leak into ground water and cause more harm than good.

2

**Section or Chapter:** MM-AQ-4

**Page:**

**Comment:** All excavating and grading activities shall cease during second stage smog alerts and periods of high winds.

This measure does not address enforcement of the measure. There jurisdictions that do not require a grading permit, so they local jurisdiction may not know when grading or excavating is occurring.

3

**Section or Chapter:** MM-AQ.7

**Page:**

**Comment:** Public streets shall be cleaned, swept or scraped at frequent intervals or at least three times a week if visible soil material has been carried onto adjacent public roads.

This measure needs to take into consideration the costs associated with increasing street sweepings. This includes increase in equipment, labor, and monitoring of public roads.

4

**Section or Chapter:** MM.AQ.11

**Page:**

**Comment:** Low sulfur or other alternative fuels shall be used in construction equipment where feasible.

This measure should include language that if alternative fuel equipment is not available, that the equipment meet the California Air Resources Board (CARB)s teir 3 engine standards.

5

**Section or Chapter:** MM.AQ.14

**Page:**

6

## COMMENT LETTER 14

**Comment:** Revegetate exposed earth surfaces following construction.

This measure is unclear as to if it would be a requirement of the development or the local jurisdictions. In addition, the use of xeroscape plantings should be included.

6 cont.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-AQ.15

**Page:**

**Comment:** Project sponsors should, where feasible, implement policies for sustainable airport development...

This measure does not clearly call out who the project sponsors are. This measure does not seem to relate to its Impact 3.2-5. The 2008 RTP would result in increased trips and VMT as well as increased growth in the region compared to today, resulting in increases in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.

7

**Section or Chapter:** MM-AQ-16

**Page:**

**Comment:** Project sponsors should, where feasible, implement a green construction policy...

Again, this measure does not clearly call out who the project sponsors are. This measure does not seem to relate to its Impact 3.2-5. The 2008 RTP would result in increased trips and VMT as well as increased growth in the region compared to today, resulting in increases in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.

The number in this measure is different. It contains a (–) instead of a (.).

8

**Section or Chapter:** MM-AQ-17

**Page:**

**Comment:** Local governments should set specific limits on idling time for commercial vehicles, including delivery and construction vehicles.

This measure should say Local governments should “enforce the State’s Anti Idling Law” for commercial vehicles, including delivery and construction vehicles.

The number in this measure is different. It contains a (–) instead of a (.).

9

## **Document: Draft 2008 RTP PEIR 3.5 Energy**

**Section or Chapter:** MM-EN.2

**Page:** 3.5-34

**Comment:** The Mitigation Measure states that “State and federal lawmakers and regulatory agencies should pursue the design of programs to either require or incentivize the expanded availability and use of alternative-fuel vehicles to reduce the impact of shifts to petroleum...”

10

## COMMENT LETTER 14

Additionally, this Measure should include wording for the expansion of related necessary infrastructure (such as alternative fuel fill stations) necessary to increase use of the alternative-fuel vehicles.

10 cont.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-EN 13

**Page:** 3.5-36

**Comment:** A bullet should be included regarding transmission line improvements and expansion for geothermal, solar and wind energy sources.

11

**Section or Chapter:** MM-EN 17

**Page:** 3.5-37

**Comment:** This item should include promoting alternative work options such as telecommuting and videoconferencing to reduce work related car trips.

12

**Section or Chapter:** MM-EN 20

**Page:** 3.5-38

**Comment:** This item should include promoting usage of public transit and worker reduced transit passes.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-EN 20

**Page:** 3.5-38

**Comment:** This item should include promoting usage of public transit and worker reduced transit passes as well as video conferencing.

13

**Section or Chapter:** MM-EN 20

**Page:** 3.5-38

**Comment:** This item should include promoting usage of public transit and worker reduced transit passes as well as video conferencing.

**Section or Chapter:** Overall Section

**Page:** Energy Section

**Comment:** Goods movement impacts the environment and consumes energy. There is virtually no discussion of goods movement in the Energy Section. Specific items that should be included are:

- Promote land use patterns that reduce truck traffic such as dedicated truck lanes to minimize idling on the freeway

Promote electrification of trucks and rail

14

## Document: Draft 2008 RTP EIR 3.7 Hazardous Materials

**Section or Chapter:** MM-HM.2

15

## COMMENT LETTER 14

### Page:

**Comment:** SCAG shall encourage the USDOT, the Office of Emergency Services, and Caltrans to continue to conduct driver safety training programs and encourage the private sector to continue conducting driver safety training.

15 cont.

This measure is vague in how SCAG shall encourage these training sessions. More information or specifics should be added.

### Section or Chapter: MM-HM.3

### Page:

**Comment:** SCAG shall encourage the USDOT and the CHP to continue to enforce speed limits and existing regulations governing goods movement and hazardous material transportation.

16

This measure is vague in how SCAG shall encourage these training sessions. More information or specifics should be added. What authority does SCAG have of CHP to ensure they are doing their jobs?

### Section or Chapter: MM-HM.4

### Page:

**Comment:** Prior to approval of any RTP project, the Lead Agency for each individual project shall consider existing and known planned school locations when determining the alignment of new transportation projects and modifications to exiting transportation facilities.

17

This measure should include some type of "buffer requirement" if there is a potential problem.

### Section or Chapter: MM-HM.5

### Page:

**Comment:** Prior to approval of any RTP project, the project implementation agency shall consult all known databases of contaminated sites and undertake a standard Phase I Environmental Site Assessment in the process of planning, environmental clearance, and construction for projects included in the 2008 RTP. If contamination is found the implementing agency shall coordinate clean up and/or maintenance activities.

18

This measure calls for the implementing agency to coordinate the clean up. If the site is private property, then the property owner(s) should be responsible for the clean up.

## Document: Draft 2008 RTP EIR 3.8 Land Use

### Section or Chapter: Residential

### Page: 3.8-2

**Comment:** The document should define what SCAG considers low, medium and high density residential development.

19

## COMMENT LETTER 14

On pages 3.8-3 and 3.8-4 there are references to maps but the maps are not present in this section of the document or commented on where they could be located within the document. Without the maps included in the document no comments could be made at this time.

20

**Section or Chapter:** Institutional

**Page:** 3.8-4

21

**Comment:** The U.S. Naval Weapons Center located in Norco was not listed.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-LU.1

**Page:** 3.8-11 thru 3.8-12

22

**Comment:** SCAG should work with the subregions as well as the cities and counties to provide them with updated general plans.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-LU.3

**Comment:** SCAG should keep their purview limited to the RTP and not ensure that local jurisdictions are consistent with their own general plans. The phrase suggest that *general plans* should be removed from this statement.

23

**Section or Chapter:** MM-LU.6

*SCAG shall provide planning services to local governments through Compass Blueprint Demonstration Projects. These projects will help local jurisdictions:*

*Develop specific plans, zoning overlays and other planning tools to enable and stimulate desired land use changes within 2% Strategy Opportunity Areas*

24

This statement suggests that SCAG could act as a consultants on these planning documents. SCAG should avoid developing specific plans and overlay districts for local jurisdictions and should provide input during the development of general plans, specific plans and overlay districts. The same holds true with SCAG completing an economic analysis on plans.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-LU.10 and .11

*10- Local governments should provide for new housing consistent with state housing law to accommodate their share of the forecasted regional growth.*

*11- Local governments should adopt and implement General Plan Housing Elements that accommodate the housing need identified through the RHNA process. Affordable housing should be provided consistent with the RHNA income category distribution adopted for each jurisdiction.*

25

These two policies seem to state the same objective that jurisdictions should implement the RHNA housing allocation into their housing elements. Number 11 is more descriptive in what the intentions are regarding housing. Suggest that the mitigation measure number 10 be deleted.

**Document: Draft 2008 RTP EIR 3.11 Population, Housing and Employment.**

**Section or Chapter:**

4-50

26

## COMMENT LETTER 14

**Page:** Page: 3.11-8

26 cont.

**Comment:** Remove text after the comma from the last sentence of the fourth paragraph. It is repeated in the first sentence of the next paragraph.

**Section or Chapter:**

**Page:** 3.11-9

27

**Comment:** The second sentence in the second paragraph under the Impacts and Mitigation Measures should be rephrased or suggest removing the word *transportation* from the sentence.

**Section or Chapter:** Impact 3.11-1

**Page:** 3.11-10

**Comment:** WRCOG would like to reiterate its concern with the Plan growth forecast (Policy Forecast in the RTP) of moving population, households and employment from the inland counties into the coastal counties when compared to the No Project growth forecast. This is not a realistic possibility and the RTP does not show what the funding adjustment will be to the inland counties. With the reduction of population, tax and fee revenues will decline and the ability to construct the infrastructure designated in the RTP for the inland counties maybe impacted. This would then lead to question if the RTP is fiscally constrained under the Plan.

28

SCAG should revisit the 2004 RTP Plan alternative that maintained the county population, household and employment levels but redistributed the growth to the existing urban areas of the counties. It emphasized the use of infill and refill development and higher densities in these areas. This increase in densities would then make the investment into transit more viable and become a greater possibility for implementation.

Under the Plan current transit investments for the inland counties would not realize their potential become a losing proposition for a longer period of time than was initially calculated.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-POP.1

**Page:** 3.11-11

**Comment:**

The mitigation measure should mention what methods will be used to assist member agencies, specifically jurisdictions, on how they can implement SCAG growth strategies at the local level.

There seems to be a disconnect between the RTP and the EIR when it comes to the HSRT for freight. The RTP discusses using technology that would allow the HSRT to use existing railroad tracks but the EIR mentions construction of elevated tracks to reduce the removal of homes and businesses. The RTP or EIR does not describe which system is to be used or if it is a combination of grade and elevated track or two separate systems, one for high-speed passenger trains and one for high-speed freight.

29

Suggest removing the word *considerable* from the last sentence in the second paragraph on page 3.11-13.

Mitigation Measure to consider.

## COMMENT LETTER 14

Businesses that are not displaced by new facilities but are disrupted by construction of facilities should be compensated for lost revenue. Construction can impact business to the point that lost income will force the closer of that business.

29 cont.

**Document:** Draft 2008 RTP EIR 3.11 Population, Housing and Employment.

**Section or Chapter:** Comparison With The No Project  
**Page:** 3.11-13

**Comment:** The comparison of the Plan and No Project does not consider the lost revenues in sale taxes and fee programs when the shift in population, households and employment. This reduction in revenues could result in fewer facilities from being constructed in areas that would lose potential funds due to the shifting of significant growth to other subregions.

30

As stated previously the RTP should use the Baseline Growth Forecast for all modeling purposes and disregard the Policy Growth Forecast from future analyses or be used only in an advisory form. SCAG should continue to develop the Infill Growth Alternative from the 2004 RTP which concentrated growth in existing urban areas and limited growth in the rural areas. This concept should be maintained and continually refined instead of creating a completely new and unrealistic growth alternative.

### **Document: Draft 2008 RTP EIR 3.12 Public Services and Utilities**

**Section or Chapter:** General Comment

**Page:**

31

**Comment:** The 2006 diversion number for the state is 56%.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-PS.5

**Page:**

**Comment:** The construction contractor shall work with the respective County's Recycling Coordinator to ensure that source reduction techniques and recycling measures are incorporated into project construction.

32

This measure should say "local government" Recycling Coordinator instead of "County's" Recycling Coordinator.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-PS-.8

**Page:**

**Comment:** Project implementation agencies shall discourage the siting of new landfills unless all other waste reduction....

33

The measure calls out the need for an undeveloped land buffer, but does not specify any recommendations for how many acres should be required.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-PS.9

34



## COMMENT LETTER 14

### Page:

**Comment:** Project implementation agencies shall discourage exporting of locally generated waste outside of the SCAG region. Disposal within the county where the waste originates shall be encouraged as much as possible...

34 cont.

The measure does not mention the County and City of Los Angeles commitment to closing their landfills and shipping their waste to other counties. The measure calls for encouraging as much as possible but does not provide any explanation as to how that would occur.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-PS.10

### Page:

**Comment:** Project implementation agencies shall adopt Zero Waste goals and practices and look for opportunities to voluntary actions to exceed the 50% waste diversion target.

35

This measure is found under Impact 3.12-3 Construction necessary to implement 2008 RTP would affect the demand for solid waste services in the SCAG region. There is no clear relevance to why this measure is listed.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-PS.12

### Page:

**Comment:** Project implementation agencies shall develop ordinances that promote waste prevention and recycling such as: requiring waste prevention efforts at all large events and venues....

36

This type of action has been implement by the California Integrated Waste Management Board through the passage and chaptering of SB 2176, Large Event and Large Venue Recycling Program.

This measure is found under Impact 3.12-3 Construction necessary to implement 2008 RTP would affect the demand for solid waste services in the SCAG region. There is no clear relevance to why this measure is listed.

**Section or Chapter:** Cumulative Impact 3.12-7

### Page:

**Comment:** Urbanization in the SCAG region will increase sustainability by 2035...

37

This impact discusses landfill capacity. It should also include a discussion on current pushes to ban alternative daily cover (ADC) which if successful will put millions of tons of undesirable greenwaste into the market. The Riverside County Waste Management Department completed a report on the greenwaste markets in the region and determined that due to increased regulation, there was not enough infrastructure or capacity to accommodate this material.

## COMMENT LETTER 14

In addition to the above discussion, there needs to be added verbiage on the closing of Puente Hills landfill and how that material will be distributed throughout the region. This is not only solid waste but ADC as well.

37 cont.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-PS.25

**Page:**

**Comment:** SCAG shall encourage projects to reuse and recycle construction and demolition waste.

This measure is vague in how SCAG shall encourage project to reuse and recycle but more information or specifics should be added.

38

**Section or Chapter:** MM-PS.26

**Page:**

**Comment:** SCAG shall encourage methane recovery in local landfills and wastewater treatment plants to generate electricity.

This measure is vague in how SCAG shall encourage project to reuse and recycle but more information or specifics should be added.

39

### **Document: Draft 2008 RTP PEIR 3.15 Water Resources**

**Section or Chapter:** General Comment

**Page:** 3.15-8

**Comment:** The description of the San Jacinto Watershed is incomplete. The following more accurately depicts the San Jacinto Watershed.

The San Jacinto Watershed covers over 700 square miles, starting in the San Jacinto Mountains, running westerly through Canyon Lake and ending in Lake Elsinore. This watershed provides drinking water and recreational opportunities to much of Riverside County.

40

**Section or Chapter:** MM-W.12

**Page:** 3.15-42

**Comment:** MM-W.12 states that "Treatment and control features such as detention basins, infiltration strips, and other features to control surface runoff and facilitate groundwater recharge ..."

This section should include the use of pervious concrete and asphalt, when and where appropriate.

41

**Section or Chapter:** MM-W.35

**Page:** 3.15-50

**Comment:** Item MM-W.35 discusses developers and local governments' roles in promoting the use of xeriscaping and weather-based irrigation systems. Absent from the discussion is an item on

42

## COMMENT LETTER 14

working with local retailers and vendors to promote the availability of drought resistant landscaping options and providing literature on where these can be purchased.

42 cont.

**Section or Chapter:** MM-W.35

**Page:** 3.15-50

**Comment:** When and where appropriate the usage of reclaimed water should also be expanded especially for use in median landscaping and hillside landscaping.

43



# CITY OF LAGUNA HILLS

*City Council*

**MAYOR**

*L. Allan Songstad, Jr.  
MAYOR PRO TEMPORE  
Joel Lautenschleger*

February 19, 2008

**COUNCIL MEMBERS**

*Randal Bressette  
Melody Carruth  
R. Craig Scott*

Mr. Hasan Ikhata  
Executive Director  
Southern California Association of Governments  
818 West Seventh Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, California 90017-3435

Dear Mr. Ikhata:

**RE: City of Laguna Hills Comments regarding SCAG's Draft 2008 Regional Transportation Plan, Draft RTP Program Environmental Impact Report, and Draft RTP Growth Forecasts**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). On behalf of the City of Laguna Hills City Council, I respectfully submit the following policy-level comments and recommendations on the draft 2008 RTP, draft Program EIR, and draft RTP growth forecasts.

The City's comments and recommendations focus on two (2) key areas, as follows:

- 1) The RTP growth forecast that will be selected for the SCAG region;
- 2) Mitigation measures proposed in the draft RTP EIR.

**Recommendation No.1 - SCAG's RTP Growth Forecast:**

***SCAG's adoption of a regional growth forecast for the 2008 RTP shall utilize, for Orange County, the Orange County Projections-2006 (OCP-2006) database, as adopted by the Orange County Council of Governments (OCCOG) on November 30, 2006.***

At a policy level, the City of Laguna Hills believes that:

- a) Recommendation #1 is consistent with adopted policy directive from the boards of directors of OCCOG and the Orange County Transportation Authority to use OCP-2006 as the basis for Orange County demographics in the 2008 RTP.
- b) OCP-2006 accurately represents the distribution and amount of population, households and employment that are forecast individually for the City of Laguna Hills

## COMMENT LETTER 15

and for Orange County, and is developed from a “bottoms-up” collaboration of Orange County jurisdictions and the Center for Demographic Research at CSUF.

- c) OCP-2006 is the only database that has been approved by Orange County jurisdictions to accurately represent the latest available estimates and assumptions for population, land use and employment through Year 2035 in Orange County.
- d) Adopting an alternate distribution of growth for Orange County contrary to OCP-2006 would fail to represent Orange County and local jurisdiction land use plans, especially in relation to the 14,000 housing units and 16,000 jobs approved in the Ranch Plan Planned Community in South Orange County unincorporated area.

1 cont.

For example, SCAG’s RTP Policy Growth Forecast significantly reduces the Ranch Plan entitlement, by shifting almost 9,000 households (out of 14,000 residential units) and 11,000 jobs (out of 16,000 jobs) from the Ranch Plan entitlement and shifting these households and jobs to other Orange County locations where such intensification is contrary to local plans, such as in the cities of San Clemente, San Juan Capistrano, and Irvine.

The OCP-2006 projections, which were reviewed by major Orange County landowners such as Rancho Mission Viejo and The Irvine Company, appropriately represent the future growth of their landholdings. At present, the only RTP growth forecast that incorporates the OCP-2006 projections is the SCAG RTP Baseline Growth Forecast.

- e) The Center for Demographic Research at CSU Fullerton, which conducts the Orange County Projection Series, has identified a number of errors with the SCAG RTP Policy Growth Forecast that will require significant correction and amendment to appropriately represent Orange County’s future growth as accounted for in OCP-2006.
- f) Adopting an alternate distribution of growth for Orange County contrary to OCP-2006, and using such an alternate distribution of growth in regional transportation analyses, could significantly distort the transportation needs and transportation capacity of planned Orange County regional improvements, such as the Foothill Transportation Corridor-South (SR-241) extension.
- g) Any growth forecast database adopted by SCAG as the regional growth forecast is required by State law to be used in county and local transportation models, in compliance with State Government Code 65089(c), which requires consistency in database between the regional SCAG transportation model, county models, and local sub-area models.
- h) OCP-2006 and its integration into the SCAG RTP Baseline Growth Forecast represent the most likely growth projection for Orange County and should therefore be approved as the SCAG region’s growth forecast. As stated above, any adoption of a regional forecast that does not include OCP-2006, would distort the modeling of transportation needs and transportation capacity.

## COMMENT LETTER 15

In addition to the policy-level comments above, the City of Laguna Hills has specific concerns about the generalized approach exhibited in SCAG's Compass Blueprint 2% Strategy (the basis for the Policy Growth Forecast) of intensifying land uses within ½ mile of transit facilities. Although the City does not oppose the concept of intensifying land uses in those areas around regional transit facilities, the implementation strategy of simply drawing a ½ mile radius around these facilities ignores the realities associated with existing topography and land uses within this radius that are inappropriate and/or infeasible to intensify. For example, the ½ mile radius surrounding the Metrolink Station in the City of Laguna Niguel appears to capture a portion of the Nellie Gail Ranch equestrian community within the City of Laguna Hills. See attached (Year 2035 Difference: SCAG Draft Policy Forecast – OCP 2006 Households) Map. This equestrian neighborhood consists (on average) of one (1) acre residential estates built pre-dominantly on significant hillside slope areas. Not only is this a very low density residential community, but the existing steep slope conditions significantly discourage development on most of the land area. The City would respectfully request that the Nellie Gail Ranch neighborhood be eliminated from the ½ mile radius area surrounding the Metrolink Station in the City of Laguna Niguel.

1 cont.

### **Recommendation No. 2 - 2008 RTP Draft EIR Mitigation Measures**

***SCAG shall remove those mitigation measures in the draft RTP EIR that would be applied to RTP transportation projects but which have no bearing on transportation project mitigation or transportation project delivery.***

***SCAG shall remove those mitigation measures in the draft RTP EIR that are proposed to be applied to local agency land use actions, such as General and Specific Plans and individual development projects, separate and distinct from transportation project delivery.***

2

At a policy level, the City of Laguna Hills believes that:

- a) The draft RTP EIR presents a framework of mitigation measures that implementing agencies and local Lead Agencies (such as cities) would be responsible for ensuring adherence as specific RTP projects are considered for approval over time.
- b) The draft RTP EIR states that Lead Agencies (such as cities) shall provide SCAG with documentation of compliance with mitigation measures through SCAG's monitoring efforts, including SCAG's Intergovernmental Review (IGR) process.
- c) Included in the listing of draft RTP EIR mitigation measures are measures relating to housing need, land use, and re-zoning strategies to promote mixed use and compact growth, solid waste requirements and programs, school capacity analyses and recreation and open space planning, among others.
- d) Certifying an EIR that includes mitigation measures, as identified in (c) above, would complicate and delay transportation project environmental clearances by requiring local agencies responsible for implementing 2008 RTP transportation projects to respond to, and comply with, mitigation measures beyond the scope of transportation project implementation and delivery. Following is a list of the measures that fall within this category, which should be deleted:

## COMMENT LETTER 15

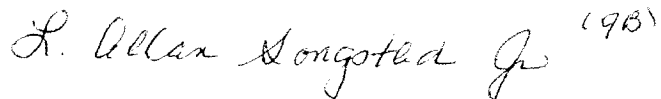
- Land Use: Mitigation Measures - MM-LU.10, MM-LU.11, and MM-LU.14
- Energy: Mitigation Measure - MM-EN.17
- Open Space: Mitigation Measures – MM-OS.11, MM-OS.23, MM-OS.31 thru 36, MM-OS.39 thru 45
- Solid Waste: Mitigation Measures - MM-PS.7 thru 15, MM-PS.17 thru 24
- Water: Mitigation Measures - MM-W.20 thru 23, MM-W.30 and 32, MM-W.35

2 cont.

In closing, The City of Laguna Hills supports the timely adoption of the 2008 RTP to enable critical transportation improvements to proceed forward in their future environmental clearances and project delivery. The policy-level recommendations identified above will ensure that Orange County's transportation needs match Orange County's planned growth. The recommendations identified above also ensure that future environmental clearances for 2008 RTP transportation projects will not be burdened with mitigation requirements that bear no relationship to transportation project implementation.

On behalf of the City of Laguna Hills, I also extend our appreciation for your personal outreach to better understand Orange County's comments and issues associated with the 2008 RTP, and with your meeting with the South Orange County mayors and city managers in January 2008 to discuss the 2008 RTP.

Sincerely,

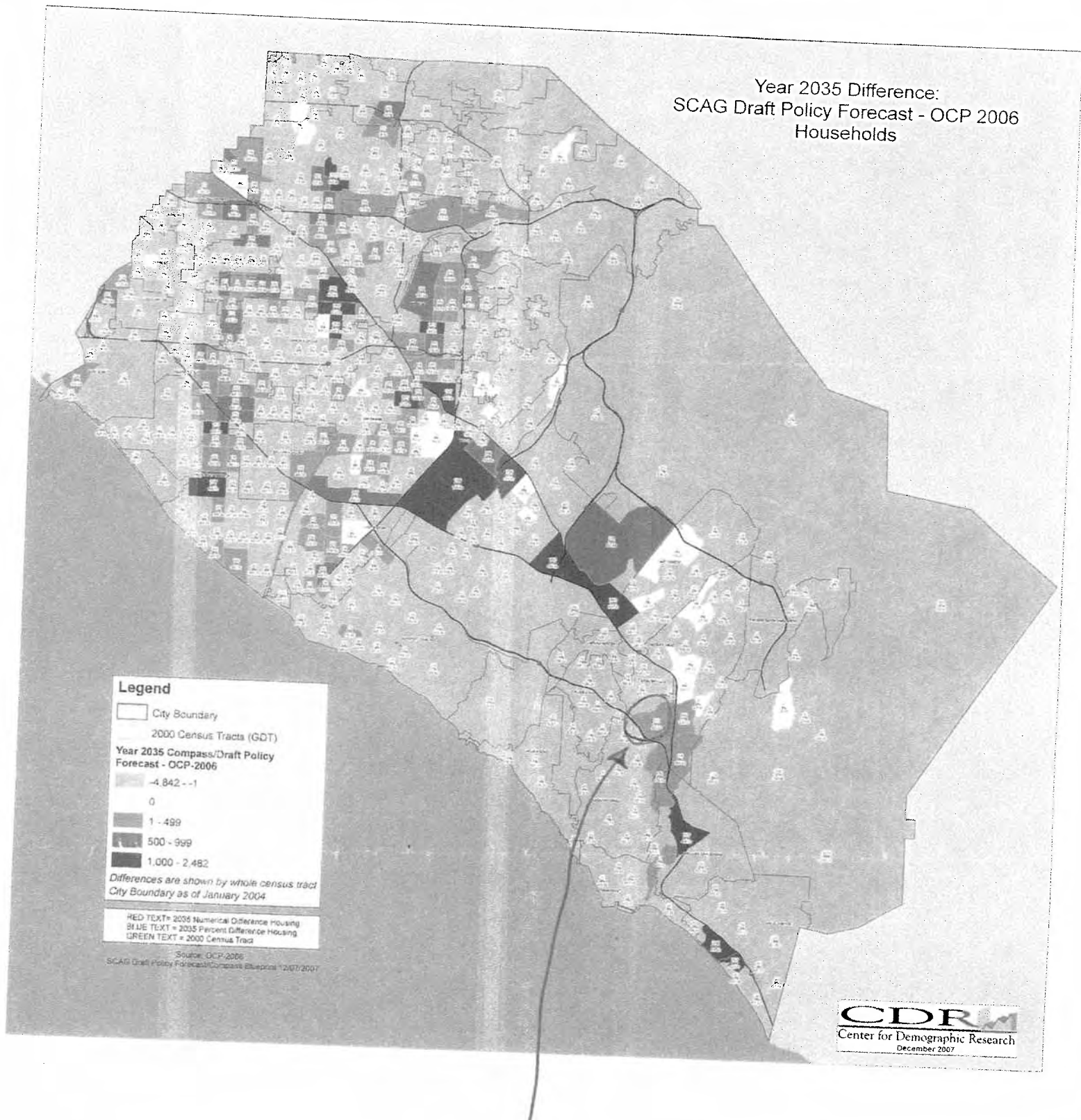


L. ALLAN SONGSTAD JR.  
Mayor  
City of Laguna Hills

Attachment – CDR Map (Year 2035 Difference: SCAG Draft Policy Forecast Minus OCP 2006 Households)

cc: City of Laguna Hills City Council  
City of Laguna Hills City Manager  
City of Laguna Hills City Attorney  
City of Laguna Hills Director of Community Development  
City of Laguna Hills Director of Public Works  
Ms. Jessica Kirchner, SCAG  
Mr. Ryan Kuo, SCAG  
Ms. Jessica Meaney, SCAG  
Dr. Frank Wen, SCAG  
Mr. Darin Chidsey, SCAG  
Ms. Deborah Diep, Center for Demographic Research

## COMMENT LETTER 15







# COMMENT LETTER 16 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

1320 NORTH EASTERN AVENUE  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90063-3294

(323) 890-4330

P. MICHAEL FREEMAN  
FIRE CHIEF  
FORESTER & FIRE WARDEN

February 13, 2008

Ms. Jessica Kirchner  
SCAG  
818 West 7th Street, 12th Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear Ms. Kirchner:

**MEDICAL/XRAY CROSS CONNECTION PLAN CHECK, SCAG DRAFT PROGRAM EIR, SCH #20077061126, REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN FROM VARIOUS COUNTY DEPARTMENTS (LACO), FFER #200800043**

The Medical/X-ray Cross Connection Plan Check has been reviewed by the Planning Division, Land Development Unit, and Forestry Division of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department. The following are their comments:

### PLANNING DIVISION:

1. The PEIR addresses future long-range transportation needs that span across several jurisdictional boundaries. At this time, there is no specific impact on fire protection services. However, in the future the Fire Department will respond as more detailed information for individual projects becomes available through each project's CEQA process.

### LAND DEVELOPMENT UNIT:

1. This project does not propose construction of structures or other improvements at this time. Therefore, until actual construction is proposed the project will not have a significant impact to the Fire Department, Land Development Unit.
2. Any development of this project within the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles County Fire Department must comply with all applicable code and ordinance requirements for construction, access, water main, fire flows and fire hydrants.

#### SERVING THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF:

AGOURA HILLS	BRADBURY	CUDAHY	HAWTHORNE	LA MIRADA	MALIBU	POMONA	SIGNAL HILL
ARTESIA	CALABASAS	DIAMOND BAR	HIDDEN HILLS	LA PUENTE	MAYWOOD	RANCHO PALOS VERDES	SOUTH EL MONTE
AZUSA	CARSON	DUARTE	HUNTINGTON PARK	LAKEWOOD	NORWALK	ROLLING HILLS	SOUTH GATE
BALDWIN PARK	CERRITOS	EL MONTE	INDUSTRY	LANCASTER	PALMDALE	ROLLING HILLS ESTATES	TEMPLE CITY
BELL	CLAREMONT	GARDENA	INGLEWOOD	LAWDALE	PALOS VERDES ESTATES	ROSEMEAD	WALNUT
BELL GARDENS	COMMERCE	GLEN DORA	IRWINDALE	LOMITA	PARAMOUNT	SAN DIMAS	WEST HOLLYWOOD
BELLFLOWER	COVINA	HAWAIIAN GARDENS	LA CANADA-FLINTRIDGE	LYNWOOD	PICO RIVERA	SANTA CLARITA	WESTLAKE VILLAGE
			LA HABRA				WHITTIER

## COMMENT LETTER 16

Ms. Jessica Kirchner  
February 13, 2008  
Page 2

### FORESTRY DIVISION – OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:

1. The statutory responsibilities of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department, Forestry Division include erosion control, watershed management, rare and endangered species, vegetation, fuel modification for Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones or Fire Zone 4, archeological and cultural resources, and the County Oak Tree Ordinance.
2. With the understanding that this is a Programmatic Environmental Document and individual projects will address specific impacts and mitigation measures we believe the areas germane to the statutory responsibilities of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department, Forestry Division have been addressed.

3

If you have any additional questions, please contact this office at (323) 890-4330.

Very truly yours,

 for John Todd

JOHN R. TODD, CHIEF, FORESTRY DIVISION  
PREVENTION SERVICES BUREAU

JRT:lc

c: Ms. Dorothea Park, Los Angeles CEO ✓



## COMMENT LETTER 17

### COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

#### DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

*"Creating Community Through People, Parks and Programs"*

Russ Guiney, Director

February 14, 2008

Ms. Jessica Kirchner  
Southern California Association of Governments  
818 West Seventh Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3435

Dear Ms. Kirchner:

#### **PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (PEIR) FOR THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP)**

The Draft PEIR for the Regional Transportation Plan has been reviewed for potential impacts on the facilities of this Department. Most of our previous comments--submitted on November 20, 2007 in response to the Notice of Preparation--have been incorporated in the Draft PEIR. However, the draft PEIR should also include the following:

- An analysis of the potential for RTP projects to cut off certain neighborhoods' access to parks and recreational areas. 1
- An analysis of the potential for RTP projects to negatively impact existing and proposed trails used for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. A map of riding and hiking trails in Los Angeles County was provided to you previously. 2

Thank you for including this Department in the environmental review process. If we may be of further assistance, please contact Clement Lau at (213) 351-5127 or [clau@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:clau@parks.lacounty.gov)

Sincerely,

Norma E. Garcia  
Deputy Director

Attachment

Comment letter dated November 20, 2007



## COMMENT LETTER 17

### COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

#### DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

*"Creating Community Through People, Parks and Programs"*

Russ Guiney, Director

November 20, 2007

Jessica Kirchner, Senior Regional Planner  
Southern California Association of Governments  
818 West Seventh Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-3435

Dear Ms. Kirchner:

**PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (PEIR)**  
**FOR THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP)**

The Notice of Preparation for the above PEIR has been reviewed for potential impacts on the facilities under the jurisdiction of this Department. We suggest that the PEIR include the following:

1. An analysis of the impacts that RTP projects would have on existing open space and recreation lands including public parks and recreational facilities/areas. Specific impacts that should be evaluated include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Potential loss or disturbance of existing open space and recreation lands;
  - Potential for transportation projects to cut off a neighborhood's access to a park or recreational area;
  - Potential noise impacts to park patrons as a result of RTP projects; and
  - Potential increase in air pollutant emissions (e.g. diesel/toxics) near a recreational or open space area.
2. A map identifying the location of all existing open space and recreation lands in the SCAG region, including public parks, recreational facilities, and other open space and recreational areas owned/maintained by non-profit, local, state, and federal agencies. This is important because the RTP would likely have a significant impact on open space and recreation lands.
3. An analysis of impacts to existing and proposed trails used for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. Please refer to the map of riding and hiking trails in Los Angeles County sent to you on July 30, 2007.

3



COMMENT LETTER 17

4. At a minimum, mitigation measures to:

- Reduce conflicts between transportation uses and open space and recreation lands;
- Minimize the loss or displacement of existing park land or open space, through the acquisition of replacement land, dedication, or payment of in-lieu fees;
- Require project implementing agencies to conduct the appropriate project-specific environmental review, including consideration of loss of open space and recreation lands prior to final approval of each project;
- Require project implementing agencies to ensure that projects are consistent with local, regional, state, and federal plans to preserve parks and open space;
- Require the use of corridor realignment, buffer zones, setbacks, berms and fencing to avoid open space and recreation land; and
- Ensure that future impacts to open space and recreation lands would be minimized through cooperation, information exchange, and program development.

3 cont.

Thank you for including this Department in the environmental review process. If we may be of further assistance, please contact me at (213) 351-5127 or [clau@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:clau@parks.lacounty.gov)

Sincerely,



Clement Lau, AICP  
Park Planner